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# Indlovukazi Yase-Afrika (Zulu Queen): A Curriculum for Young Women's Empowerment in Kwa-Zulu Natal

Judith Merzbach  
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# Indlovukazi Yase-Afrika (Zulu Queen):

A curriculum for young women's empowerment in Kwa-Zulu Natal

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School for International Training

South Africa: Social and Political Transformation

Spring 2010

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## ***Abstract***

Fifteen years into a democratic society, fifteen years after the abolition of a governmental structure that purposefully marginalized a majority of citizens, South African women are still living as a marginalized majority. While the position of women holding symbolic and representational positions remains changed for the better, the role of women in civil society has made little progress. Since the end of apartheid, the number of cases of sexual assault and rape against women continues to increase, painting a bleak picture regarding the protection of women. Young women also find themselves the victims of HIV/AIDS at an incredibly unbalanced rate of 4:1, highlighting the gendered nature of such a disease.

In order for women to move past these and other social stigmas, they must inevitably feel that they are in control of their own lives and lifestyles. To harness this control, education is a key actor, empowering women to understand the location, prevention and treatment of physical and social problems. For young women, born into the free generation, this becomes incredibly important, as they have the greatest control over the future of the nation. To this end, the creation of a young women's female empowerment program serves this vulnerable and impressionable population.

Through literature and personal contact, I have developed an understanding of some of the main gender-based problems facing South African women in today's society. Through the lens of feminism, I have worked to create a curriculum that invests itself in cultural sensitivity so far as not to promote the imperialism of one culture, but simply a change from within. I have worked to create twelve week lesson plan that focuses on the issues facing young women today, building upon education, prevention and treatment of issues and social stigmas. Through implementation of four out of twelve weeks, I have been able to see how such a curriculum can function in this particular community and develop concurrent lessons accordingly. It is through this curriculum and exploration of its implementation that I argue such a vehicle is a necessary mechanism for change.

## ***Introduction***

“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent”

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Through the rise of a new democracy, many South African parties now enjoy expansions of freedom and protection by a new, liberalized constitution. While constitutional equality and government protection offer newfound freedom to some, they have created startling voids of conditional freedom for others. South African women remain at the crux of this manifestation, amassing symbolic representations of expanded rights and freedoms while their individual liberties remain threatened. Women make up more than 30% of the representation in parliament and yet struggle to find a voice on issues such as gender-based violence and teenage pregnancy. Why is it that a nation founded with such liberal principles in its constitution continues to display an increase in the number of female victims of rape and sexual assault? These figures are not simply disturbing; they are antidemocratic in their foundation. The lack of championed rights for females in South Africa identifies women as a marginalized majority, a principle largely in conflict with the idea of democracy.

Beyond gender-based violence, women in South Africa face a number of other gendered issues such as the relatively higher incidence of HIV/AIDS among females. Such numbers depict young women as four times more likely to be living with the disease as their male counterparts. In addition, women struggle to find a voice for issues of depression and discrimination, not to mention the stigmatism that democracy does not apply to the home. Young girls often confront discrimination through teenage pregnancy, the protection against which remains an established, protected right under the constitution. Such conflicts epitomize the need for change in South Africa. As the nation progresses into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and remains in the international spotlight hosting world-class events, such problems cannot and should not perpetuate.

In order to mitigate some of the problems faced by South African women, I have created a curriculum to be instituted in young girls groups around South Africa. The curricular focus is female youth empowerment through a variety of mediums. The curriculum draws on the use of art,

creativity and dialogue to understand such problems as gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, girl-fighting, depression, teenage pregnancy and identity. The object of the twelve lessons is to engender a sense of control among young girls and develop a desire to control one's own destiny. The foundation of the curriculum is in presenting information in an engaging and tangible way so that girls are empowered to develop their own methods for dealing with such problems. For these young girls, understanding that they have the opportunity to make a difference and control their own lifestyles and well beings is integral in fostering change.

Such a project was developed through the Kwa-Zulu Natal Youth Empowerment Program (KZN YEP) after engaging with the organization in repeated sessions. The patriarchy of such a group manifested itself both among leadership and through lessons where females were deemed capable of sharing certain, but not all roles within the family. Upon closer examination of the organization and its goals, the necessity of a girls group to elevate the status of women on a personal and community level became clear. Many girls had never participated in an all female group before, and had little understanding of the gendered nature of many of these issues. For the YEP as well, this group would provide young men with an opportunity to support women's issues, even if simply through affirmation that such a group should exist.

This paper will contain the development of, rationale for and analysis of implementation for the first four lessons of the Kwa-Zulu Natal YEP girls group curriculum. The eight other lessons will be attached as an appendix, and considered part of the academic work; however they were not implemented by the researcher given the specifics of time constraints. In addition, through interviews with the YEP members and the girls in group, this paper will examine the different understandings of female empowerment in order to conclude the necessity of peer facilitation and cultural sensitivity. To that respect, cultural sensitivity has its limitations when it supports a culture of explicit patriarchy or sexism within the context of a democratic society and thus, the development of conflict, for the researcher. To what extent does the identity of a white, American female hinder the development of a curriculum for South African women, and hinder its implementation within an all black community? Such issues must be explored and appeased through the course of this study.

## ***Literature Review***

### **The Role of Women in Contemporary South Africa**

Through dense and turbulent histories, South Africans have fought for their freedoms to create the “rainbow nation” of today. Though by definition, freedom and equality for all South Africans exists, the equality enjoyed by many South Africans remains conditional. One manifestation of conditional equality becomes evident through examining the position of South African women. To educate this perspective I examine a brief history of the South African women’s movement and discuss the position of women with respect to conventional feminist theory. Drawing on historical context in conjunction with the situation of women today, I will describe a number of gender-specific issues such as rape and teen pregnancy. Through acknowledging history and contemporary society I will conclude that young women’s empowerment groups can contribute positive inertia to the national and international movement for women’s rights.

#### **History**

##### ***Pre-1994:***

The driving social forces and the position of South African women with respect to equality has waxed and waned with the political climate of the time. For the purposes of uncovering the history of the modern South African woman, I will situate my discussion of women’s history in the late twentieth century. Paramount to this discussion is the role that culture and tradition play in defining the perceptions of women by society. For many years in the twentieth century, culture and tradition were deeply entrenched in the category of one’s race. This presents a challenge to the discussion of a united women’s cultural heritage that I will overcome by acknowledging that oppression often transcends boundaries of race and social classification. The quest for universal women’s suffrage, for instance, began with partial enfranchisement in 1930, and saw its ultimate success in 1994 with the new South African constitution (Ballington 2004). In this case, as well as in many other instances of success in the collective women’s movement, many actors worked to further a united cause. For this reason, I hesitate to define oppression and successes in terms of race, recognizing that activism often occurs at the intersection of race, class and sexuality to promote gender equality.



South African politics of oppression are rich with a history of women's activism and progress both in the struggle for racial and gender equality. In 1913, South African women championed the rights of all their fellow countrymen in disputing pass laws, challenging the government until these laws were revoked for another twenty years (Meintjes and Simons 2002). Women continued their quest for equality through their rejection of Bantu education during apartheid and through participation in civil society organizations that fought for the protection of all human rights (Ballington 2004). Under the apartheid government, women participated in and organized strikes both in the labor and consumer markets, women joined Umkhonto weSizwe, the military arm of the anti-apartheid struggle, and women worked for movements to further the expansions of women's rights (Unterhalter 1983). In the late 1980s, women working against the apartheid government began to align the principle of advancing human rights with advancing of women's rights (Britton and Fish 2009). This unification of ideals persisted and remained a dominant theme throughout reconstruction. The contribution of women toward the anti-apartheid struggle illustrates their active role in civil society organizations and resilience to oppression. In a politically hostile environment, women promulgated a culture of activism to develop joint women's ideologies against discrimination.

While the specific engagements of women throughout the apartheid movement display fragments and pockets of women's activism, tracing women's role in civil society depicts an explicit narrative of progress. The African National Congress adopted a women's unit in 1943, due to the increased prevalence of women in anti-apartheid politics. Formerly known as FSAW, the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) served to unite women in the political anti-apartheid struggle. Though markedly not the first united organization for women, the creation of the ANCWL demonstrates an increase in women's activism at the advent of apartheid. The ANCWL created a venue for increased female participation and unification in boycotting pass laws, standing up against Bantu education, fighting forced removals due to race classifications, and other integral parts of the fight for freedom. In theory however, and in practice, the ANCWL remained committed to furthering the ideas of human rights *alongside* their feminist ideology (Britton and Fish 2009). Consequently in forming an autonomous organization for women, the ANC submitted to the continuation of a gendered society, with separate spheres of existence for males and females.

The ANCWL worked to add both symbolic and tangible significance to the struggle for freedom, disseminating information, support and political prowess to many South Africans. Moreover, the actions of the ANCWL demonstrated their dualistic commitment to ending discrimination. In 1955 when the ANC and other supporting political associations issued the *Freedom Charter*, the ANCWL issued a supplementary document entitled *What Women Demand* (Albertyn, Hassim and Meintjes 2002). This appeal for equality enumerated the rights that women felt were complementary to the essence of equality. These rights spanned a spectrum from itemizing women's healthcare needs to calling for the banning of atomic bombs speaking knowledgeably about rights for and to protect children. The significance of this document lies in the creation of a set of rules meant to govern the country and thus implies women in positions of political leadership. Concurrently, the language and attention to detail throughout suggest an extensive understanding of the grievances of women.

As anti-apartheid social movements escalated in the 1960s and 1970s, the apartheid state banned the existence of many dissenting political organizations and parties. Notably, the ANCWL remained a legal organization, undermining its theoretical credibility (Britton and Fish). Although the ANCWL contributed significantly to the struggle against apartheid, the legitimacy of its existence in a political arena comes into question through its legal perpetuation during the period of party-banning. The connotations of the decision not to ban the ANCWL suggest that it was not perceived a viable political organization.

While political parties remained banned, the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in 1985 created an outlet to voice grievances for social reform and unites the resistance movement through a non-political association. Women played an active role in COSATU, working to achieve the goals of nationalism in conjunction with a feminist agenda. COSATU played a significant role in the anti-apartheid struggle, and women remained committed and active throughout its development. In actuality however, women faced gender discrimination while working in this organization dedicated to the expansion of human rights (Britton and Fish). The irony lies in the trade union's work in development toward equal rights while continuing to act as a microcosm of greater society with respect to the rights of women.

*Post-Apartheid:*

As the political climate of South Africa started to shift away from the policies of apartheid, women capitalized on this time period for negotiation of their own agenda. Women participated in discussions to create the framework of the new South Africa, demonstrating a national commitment on at least a symbolic level, to allow women to hold positions of power (Meintjes and Simons). In 1992, the formation of a Women's National Coalition (WNC) exhibited these convictions, as the WNC transcended boundaries of race and class to prioritize the advancement of the condition of women (Meintjes 2002). Democratization held much promise for women as equality for all was enshrined in the 1996 Constitution under the auspicious declaration "*The Republic of South Africa is one, sovereign, democratic state founded on the following values... b. Non-racism and non-sexism*" (Constitution RSA, 1996). Women hailed the expansion of their rights, and looked to the government to protect and preserve the new, equal position of women.

With a commitment to supporting human rights, the new government developed supporting institutions to research and advance the position of women. Commissions were created to help with the democratization process and usher in a new era of equality for all. The Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) was created as one of these organizations, to guide the progress toward a non-sexist society. The commission is mandated by its founding principles to remain impartial while accurately representing the information it collects on the condition of women (Meintjes 2002). In conjunction with the CGE, the goals of the constitution induced the creation of the Office on the Status of Women (OSW). Situated in the office of the deputy president, the OSW holds symbolic significance in attesting to women's rights as a priority through its location in the office of the deputy president. The OSW and the CGE struggled with their implementation goals however, because little budgetary support was made for the non-sexist democratic transformation (Meintjes 2002). Moreover, the issues that confronted the feminist transition were sometimes deeply entrenched in the traditional and social structures of society. For these transformative institutions, the task transformation was daunting.

One area of significant progress in the movement toward gender equality is women's representation in legislative bodies. More specifically, COSATU announced a goal in 1997 to increase women's representation in parliament to 1/3 of all elected officials. The ANC adopted this goal into their national party politics, and with the help of a proportional representation electoral model,

women now hold 44% of all seats in the lower house of parliament and 29% in the upper house (Women.. 2010). To this end, South Africa has experienced a tremendous amount of gender-mainstreaming success.

### **Feminist Theory**

In educating the context of the women's movement today, feminist theory provides a useful lens through which to examine historical and contemporary conditions. While extensive literature exists, I will focus my study on the endorsement and analysis of a number of feminist authors who focus on civil society and the forces of gender submission. Through my discussion on civil society, I will create a platform supporting my assertion that young women's organizations and associations lay the foundation to continued advancement on the position of women today in both the private and public sphere.

Since COSATU issued a statement, endorsed by the ANC, that the number of female representatives in parliament should be 1/3 of all representatives, an increased number of women hold positions in national representative bodies. Feminist scholars such as Denise Walsh, Gay Seidman, and Helemn Moffett agree that today the space for advancement of feminist ideology exists through civil society organizations. Civil society exists in the fluid connection of the public and private sphere (Britton and Fish 2002). Notwithstanding national representation, women hold few positions of public office around South Africa (Hicks 2010). With women figures in public office, little improvement exists in the condition of women with regards to rape, HIV/AIDS, and equal pay or hiring opportunities. Women are the oppressed majority in contemporary politics, and women representatives in government make a symbolic but hardly tangible difference. The advantage then lies on capitalizing on the political climate of transition to mobilize support for women's movements on a regional or local. To return to the grassroots mobilization tactics used to unite women during the early 1990s to lobby for the language of transformation to include denunciations of sexism.

The South African transition to democratic governance launched women into positions of power almost overnight. This form of equalizing gender roles is atypical to normative feminist transformation patters where gradual process is backed by overwhelming support at many levels. The

sudden nature of South African's gender mainstreaming created a vacuum for grassroots political support whereas it headlined representative politics. Women rapidly left the private sphere to participate in the newly enfranchised public sphere, creating a void in civil society (Walsh 2002). Because civil society lies at the foundation of change and support for national politics, the changing nature of political participation concentrated political activity in symbolic representation. The importance of women's inclusion in national-level politics should not be overlooked however the presence of women as an autonomous power in civil society must be restored. Restoration of women in civil society roles will reinvigorate the bridge between public and private life, developing inertia towards a more political existence.

Deconstructing histories of patriarchy took the back burner to representation during transformation. Examining gender-based violence highlights the patriarchy that exists today, and contributes to an understanding of female oppression. A more educated perspective on oppression gives merit to the need for a more active women's role in civil society. Gender-based violence describes a range of issues from spousal abuse to rape. No noteworthy positive changes in the number of women who suffer these abuses followed the end of apartheid. In fact, the number of sexual assaults on women increased after state democratization. This not only suggests that the social position of women remains stagnant; it highlights violence as a form of routine suppression and perpetuates the patriarchy of South Africa. The high incidence of gender-based violence suggests a lasting legacy of apartheid control and suppression, warranting a need for change to truly democratize (Moffett 2002). From a lengthy period of systematic oppression a mentality developed that in order to elevate one's social position, another must be dominated or suppressed. True to this theory, men use sexual violence as a way to augment their position in society, contributing to a lasting tradition of patriarchy. Patriarchy and violence against women are tools of control that are reaffirmed by narratives of apartheid. For many years, South Africans listened to discourses of submission justified by the need to control one faction of population. This history of explicit affirmation of identity suppression creates a culture of tacit affirmation of other forms of suppression. At the forefront of the politics of gender suppression is this history of justification.

In order to live in the democratic society South Africans strive to create, they must accept the connection between gender equality and a more democratic society. Gender suppression politics are

fueled, in part, by the separation between public and private spheres, furthering the argument for expansion of women's participation in civil society. Democracy in its essence is inhibited by the failure to reconcile the ideas of an individual with the ideas of a country. For those who view the mutually exclusive existence of private and public space, an anti-democratic society perpetuates. To enjoy universal rights, participation in the structures that unite personal and national convictions, develops a foundation for actualized change. For women, this sphere of participation is civil society. To rebuke the idea that some "*do not believe in democracy in the home,*" promotes a more democratic society (Moffett 2002). In a country governed by the people, individuals do not have the right to opt-out of the greater democratic principles of governance. Women must work and stand together through grassroots organizations to promote gender equality, and a widespread understanding of how gender suppression hurts democracy.

The CGE demonstrates part of the paradox between women's active participation in civil society and their desire for representation through examination of its actions and conflicts. The political dilemmas of the CGE came to light in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, as the commission admitted its struggles to unite in working for gender equality. In its early mandate, the CGE committed itself to representing the interests of women. This proved to be a daunting and challenging task that involved first defining what it meant to be a woman and then exactly what women's interests were. In dissemination of funds and efforts, the commission found itself torn between the hosts of issues that affect women, and the women they affect. For instance, the CGE struggled between changing ideologies and legal access on the behalf of women, and implementing local-level projects that would garner support for women in communities (Seidman 2007). This paradox speaks to the crux of the problem faced by the women's movement today; the problems women face are too many and too deeply espoused in society that they require multi-faceted amelioration approaches. For a body that operates on a national level however, the attention women's issues require proves a challenge. These issues faced by the CGE further illustrate the need for female involvement in civil society. While a national institution that champions women's rights serves some of the purpose of furthering gender equality, the gambit of issues that women must deconstruct to develop a gender-neutral society requires an approach from many perspectives and dimensions.

Women's grassroots activism and inclusion in civil society includes both action on a community level and association with an NGO or other multilateral institutions. These organizations work to advance the position of women through collective action and mobilization, and many are issue-specific. Integral to the continued success of women's movements in South Africa is the proliferation of youth organizations that focus on women's issues. Young women's advocacy groups and associations operate on a dualistic model to engender change. Not only do these groups of young people increase women's mobilization efforts and recognition, they work to change the attitude of a generation empowering females to work toward their own goals and ambitions of a non-sexist society.

Case studies of young women's groups depict astounding success in developing an empowered identity. Community-based organizations, as well as NGOs that operate at a local level work to develop programs for young women with respect to the circumstances in which they live. Paramount to the success of these groups is the development of an understanding of citizenship and equality. *The Children's Budget Unit* (CBU) is one such organization that works to provide young male and female children with the tools they need to manage financial stability. The impact on young girls of working with finances was the development of the resources necessary to work with finance and a better understanding of individual rights. This program looked to overturn the construction of female that is associated with poor fiscal skills and the inability to work with money (Moolman 2002). In its execution, the CBU used a peer facilitation model to create a culture of shared learning and experience as well as community empowerment as a whole. A peer-educational model is further advocated by university student Krystal Collier, who asserts, "*peer education emphasizes that the youth are assets to the community and can act as active agents of change...*" (Collier 2009). Through youth empowerment and peer education, a community of socially empowered leaders emerges (Worth 2008). Youth leadership speaks to a generation of newly empowered women that forecasts advancements in overall society.

### **The Position of Women's Issues Today**

In light of the need for young women's outlets for activism, I will create a curriculum that focuses its efforts on determining the locations of gender inequality, and working to mitigate these situations. The discussion of gendered politics will concentrate on the indicators of women's

oppression through gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS and teen pregnancy. Exploration of these issues exposes the way they are explicitly and implicitly gendered, and defines outlets for change. Within the construction of female youth organization, the space for education followed by young, political activism champions notions of progressive change.

*Gender-based violence:*

The indicators of gender-based violence in South Africa point to a disturbing reality. Numbers suggest that the incidence of rape among South African women is the highest in the world, for those countries not at war (Moffett 2002). The staggering data details that the prevalence of rape among South African women is one out of every three, and that one out of every four men admits to raping a woman within the last year<sup>1</sup> (Bouwer 2010). These numbers are especially bleak when noting the increase in number of sexual assault victims since the end of apartheid, in contrast with the government's commitment to ending gender discrimination (Moffett 2002). The violence and rape is markedly colorblind, demonstrating the universality and scope of the problem remains located in gender.

Although the problem of rape in South Africa seems to be exacerbated by existing issues of poverty, drug and alcohol abuse and lack of education, these factors merely parallel high rape numbers; they do not indicate its eminent perpetuation. Rape occurs as a conscious decision, and is sometimes justified by the need to teach a woman a lesson, or by the need for control (Moffett 2002). One out of every four women reports that she experienced some kind of violence from her partner, increasing the severity of the situation (Outwater, Abrahams and Campbell 2005). The discovery that those most trusted and dear to women are the ones that abuse them marks an inconsistency in reality. For these reasons, women must understand the prevalence of violence, and unite to fight against it. Every woman has the right to exist in a healthy relationship, free from abuse, and to stand up against this abuse at an individual level contributes to a greater social movement.

Paramount to these concerns is the number of cases of sexual violence that go unreported (Kim, Martin and Denny 2003). The reasons behind the lack of reporting are many-fold however some indicate clear situations that necessitate change. According to Police Minister Nathi Mthetwa, 426

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<sup>1</sup> These numbers are according to the 2009 Medical Research Council report, and based on self-reported surveying.



police officers were formally charged with wrongdoings including rape and murder between April 1, 2008 and August 1, 2009 (Bouwer 2010). The incredible volume of these charges alone, including the story of one young woman who was gang-raped by three policemen, suggests why women use a cautionary attitude in involving the police. In addition, although women enjoy equal rights under the new Constitution, no specific rights guarantee protection for rape or sexual assault victims. Instead, women must submit to the same legal stipulations as men.

The inconsistency and inefficiency in the court systems for rape victims is highlighted by the 2006 rape trial of current president, Jacob Zuma. Although Zuma was not president at the time, the trial still received a considerable amount of attention given his position as deputy president. Embodying the conventional scholarship that violence and sexual abuse are socially acceptable and normative, this case depicts a grave social situation for South African women (Outwater, Abrahams and Campbell 2005). The verdict of the case found Zuma not-guilty of rape based partly on the assertion that the victim was “*unreliable*” because she was raped as a child and thus, potentially unstable (Moffett 2002). This dismissal demonstrates the lack of services available for rape victims and also their dehumanization. Zuma’s victim’s classification as unstable on account of her first rape, years later, demonstrates the normative assumption that rape affects a person’s mental stability for years. Government services must address this condition before 1/3 of all South African women are thereby considered unstable. In addition, the case dismissal embodied dehumanizing qualities through the classification of a rape victim as unstable. Not only does this justification burden the victim for life, it insinuates that rape robs a victim of her mental stability.

#### *HIV/AIDs:*

Causally related to rape are those figures that demonstrate a higher incidence of females living with AIDS than males. HIV/AIDS is a gendered epidemic in South Arica, made evident through the figures that suggest among young South Africans, HIV is prevalent in an estimated 15.6% of the female population, compared to 2.6% of the male population<sup>2</sup> (Morrell, Epstien, Unterhalter, Bhana and Molestane 2009). In 2008, the numbers depicted a 3:1 prevalence among females to males ages

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<sup>2</sup> These results are from a study in the year 2000.

15-19, and a 4:1 ratio of ages 20-24 (“Estimated HIV Prevalence among South Africans...” 2008). Because AIDS appears a gendered epidemic in South Africa, scholars find this notion is almost inexorably linked to the high incidence of rape among females. In addition, the culture of multiple, concurrent partners, contributes heavily to the proliferation of the disease (Colbin 2010).

What do these numbers suggest for young people today? Case studies indicate that the discussion of HIV/AIDS in Life Orientation classes in schools often politicizes the discussion of the disease to fit the interests of the school rather than providing the students with information (Morrell, Epstein, Unterhalter, Bhana, Molestane 2009). AIDS is sometimes portrayed as a disease linked to deviance, stigmatizing AIDS patients and contributing to their mystified misbehavior. Demystifying AIDS in school curriculums and discussing it in light of certain social realities works in contrast to some cultural norms. The increased prevalence of AIDS among gay populations, for instance, and the acknowledgment of gay women as the fastest growing HIV/AIDS population per capita often have local political implications (Outwater, Abrahams and Campbell 2005). Although the South African constitution promises equal rights to gay and lesbian couples, many individuals harbor resentment against homosexuality (Daniel 2010). For many teachers, *“implementing what was required of them in relation to frank discussion of sexuality, gender and [HIV] was more than they could manage, given their personal and social histories and positions”* (Morrell, Epstein, Unterhalter, Bhana, Molestane 2009). This situation portrays the limitations and difficulty of integrating HIV/AIDS education into the classroom.

Because classroom sessions are at times biased and ineffective, local-based organizations and NGOs contribute significantly to the mitigation and education efforts. Many groups work to provide outreach and care as well as to educate individuals about transmission and treatment for the disease. On a local level, individuals can engage in dialogue and understanding of the disease. In addition, publications on the impact to families and communities of persons living with HIV/AIDS work to decrease the social vulnerability of the HIV positive population. The issue in South Africa is not the prevalence of information, it's the availability. Shame, embarrassment and lack of resource availability often present a conflict to open discussion and dissemination of care. Vulnerable populations are further marginalized by their situation within a third world context. Slow service-provision inhibits treatment, even where government-approved, effective methods exist (Kim, Martin

and Denny 2003). To fight all these obstacles, education plays a crucial role (Morrell, Epstein, Unterhalter, Bhana, Molestane 2009).

Trends do show an increase in awareness and in protection/ prevention throughout the last few years. As international light is shed on the high incidence of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, intervention in education spurs positive results. Condom usage, one of the most cost-effective methods of HIV/AIDS prevention, has increased from 57% in 2002 to 87% in 2008 among males ages 15-24. For females however, the population where HIV/AIDS is more prevalent, trends depict a lower incidence of regular condom usage ("Condom Use"... 2008). Another positive advancement in the South African battle against HIV/AIDS is the increase in the number of people reporting HIV/AIDS testing within the previous 12 months. While the number of females who know their status remains higher than the number of males, both genders report a positive increase. Overall, 25% of the South African population represents knowing their status, a twofold increase from 2005 ("Awareness"...2008). More alarming however, is the multilateral decrease in those reporting to have *"correct knowledge about prevention of sexual transmission of HIV,"* indicating that there is room for improvement in the field of education ("Correct"...2008).

HIV/AIDS education demands that participants know tools for prevention and treatment of the disease. The fundamental facts of the disease, such that it is a blood-borne illness, and that its position as a global pandemic is very new, lay at the foundation of this education. For individuals to understand HIV, a simplified, basic knowledge of immune functions will educate their perception HIV. HIV appears as a modern disease, rarely present in archived blood samples. To this end, the position of HIV as a pandemic corresponded with an early 1990s spike in the incidence of the disease. In 2006, the international scope of the disease depicted that about 45% of the HIV positive population are women, a figure that is wholly inconsistent with the South African experience. As a virus, HIV works to attack the specific cells in the human body that work to keep the immune system healthy and strong. The position of HIV as a retrovirus means that it can effectively copy itself through the human body, destroying or altering host cells. Once a person is determined to be HIV positive, he or she will start on a management plan to control the activity of the disease. When the disease becomes more advanced, the patient's drug dosages and frequency will increase, supporting the

immune system, and working to keep the body from developing any other concurrent illness (Dyk 2008).

Most HIV patients will manage the disease through antiretroviral therapy, which functions on a cellular level to combat the reproduction of virally infected cells. HIV positive patients are at a high risk of contracting other air and blood-borne pathogens, due to the weakened state of their immune-response. Many of the AIDS related deaths are actually the result of a patient contracting a flu or pneumonia that attacks and kills a heavily weakened immune system. Home-based care of the disease is possible for most patients, especially in the early stages of treatment. Friends, family and neighbors should know the nature of transmission of the disease and take care to protect themselves from contact with any of the following: blood, seamen, breast milk, vaginal secretions. Knowledge of HIV transmission and prevention are two key ingredients to mitigating its proliferation. Because HIV is located in the blood, any contact with the blood of an HIV positive patient with an open wound can cause disease transmission. For this reason, any contact with blood *of any person* should utilize a protective barrier (ex: latex gloves). This holds true for intravenous drug users as well, as sharing needles risks blood contamination. If a person does come into contact with blood of another person of unknown status, the HIV testing should be administered as soon as possible. HIV is also transmitted through vaginal fluid and seamen. Any sexual conduct (including oral sex) should take precaution to use a protective barrier. Condoms are the most effective method of sexual protection however dental dams can also reduce the risk of transmission during oral contact. Infants can contract HIV through mother's breast milk and thus, HIV positive mother should evaluate the potential risk before engaging in breast feeding. All these very specific and limited modes of transmission illustrate that HIV is a highly preventable disease. Empowered with knowledge about the disease, treatment and prevention, South Africa can mitigate its abnormally high incidence (Dyk 2008).

#### *Teen Pregnancy in schools:*

The last of South Africa's gendered politics I will discuss is appropriately the most obviously gendered situation. Brief regard to the greater issue of gender discrimination because of pregnancy

demonstrates the location of this problem is most often the workplace. In a precedent forming case in 2000, the Labour Appeal Court ruled against a woman claiming that she was not hired because of her pregnancy, a manifestation of gender discrimination. While the ruling favored the defendant, Woolworths (the defendant) admitted to practicing gender discrimination on the basis of pregnancy (Wyllie 2000). This ruling was a setback for all women, defining a competing role between pregnancy and job aspirations. In addition, it marked a tacit affirmation for gender discrimination in the work place by refusing to protect constitutional rights.

For young girls, workplace discrimination manifests itself in the arena of school. Case studies of in-school pregnancy highlight negative treatment by administrators, educators and other students. Morrell et. al describe the negative attitudes and accommodations made by schools during youth pregnancy. In more than one case, a school cited morals and poor role modeling as reasons for discriminating against young girls (Morrell, Epstein, Unterhalter, Bhana, and Molestane 2009). Discrimination against teen pregnancy manifests itself in a variety of forms, from forbidding pregnant students to attend school, to not allowing pregnant girls to wear school uniforms (because they are not representing the school in a positive light). The freedom in schools from discrimination because of pregnancy is protected by the South African Schools Act of 1996 however case studies indicate that it remains prevalent. Teachers cited the negative impact pregnant students have on other learners, and their need to protect learners from this negative precedent (Bhana, Clowes, Morrell and Shefer 2008). Furthermore, this oppression of young girls casts pregnancy an individual problem rather than a social problem, limiting the space for collective action.

### **Conclusion**

The politics of women in South African society are riddled with historical legacies and traditional practice. Evident through theoretical history, women in South African society need to unite on a grassroots level to mobilize change. In part, this process requires a deeper understanding of women's issues and the politics of today, and in part it requires the space to do so. Women's organizations at a national level have the ability to advocate for the symbolic creation of expanded rights for women, but the inertia to protect these rights lies in civil society.

## ***Methodology:***

The success of this curriculum hinged on my ability to appropriately balance first and secondary sources, a mélange of culture and fact that resonated with girls in the KZN YEP. The primary sources for this study consisted of parties closely related to the KZN YEP, and the girls who were a part of it. I conducted a number of formal interviews with the KZN YEP group leader in order to develop a situational perspective for this curriculum. My goal for these interviews was to gather information about why the KZN YEP has little history of female leadership, and why such a group did not already exist. I also valued his opinion for the subjects which he considered integral to group discussion. While asking thought-provoking questions, I noted the attitude of the interviewee and his body language as he responded to my questions. The benefit of this observational method in conjunction with oral acquisition was in my ability to monitor some of the emotions tied to his thoughts. When I asked whether he would be open to female leadership in the KZN YEP, for instance, he took a deep breath, made a face (probably unconsciously) and rocked back in his chair before answering that it depended on what kind, but probably. In this situation, his non-verbal cues provided a more genuine response than his voluntary admissions.

Additional interviews were conducted of two male members of the YEP volunteer staff on the subject of the historical lack of female participation in the YEP. In addition, I found these young men invaluable resources in condoning my hypothesis that patriarchy develops a very male-centric society, which makes it very difficult for women to find a place within this society. These interviews were conducted on a formal basis with express consent and knowledge of the project at hand.

In order to create a working model for the girls group curriculum, I attended two KZN YEP Friday meetings, one as an observer, and one as a group leader. In each session I watched the format of the discussion, the level of discipline and listened to the opinions of the students, both male and female. When I took the time to solicit females for the girls group, I noted the reaction of both young males and females in the room to this suggestion. I looked at the body language between the participants, and noted who dominated conversation. I explained to the group the voluntary nature of joining this girls group and reiterated its function and purpose while closely monitoring their

reactions. These sessions were valuable in understanding the group dynamic atmosphere the girls were accustomed to.

From the girls themselves, I conducted interviews with nine of the group participants who were fully informed about the nature of the interviews and the research being conducted and who each authorized permission for the interviews. I gathered information about previous group participation, issues they liked to discuss and issues they would like to see discussed throughout the group. I looked to the girls for feedback and suggestions both through formal interviews and anonymous surveys and questions. I allowed the girls to reflect anonymously and openly about their experience in group at the end of the session, and to suggest topics for further discussion as well as to ask anonymous questions. From these experiences I was able to grow and adapt my curriculum to fit the needs of these girls in this community.

For my secondary sources I consulted a number of different types and mediums of literature to gather both information and an understanding of historical and contemporary context. In order to educate my South African perspective, I conferred with the literature of a number of South African feminists. These texts helped me to step outside of my American parameters and engage in the mindset of a South African. In addition, I looked into local feminist publications such as *Agenda* magazine to read interviews, op-eds and articles on the position of women in society. These publications fueled much of my surface research on many topics, with citations that led me to more in-depth analysis. In addition to these sources, I used historiographies constructed both through feminist and analytical perspectives to begin to grasp the historical location of the issues and also issue progression. I used reports from NGOs and government institutions to educate and inform my assertions using empirical data and evidence. These reports held the raw data that supported my hypothesis and the findings of others in the field. Finally, I used the internet to connect with some current data, statistics and medical websites to keep my research well rounded. In addition, the medical information I required for my study was sometimes technical and required that it came from an accurate up to date source, which is why I saw the internet as best fit.

*Strengths and Weaknesses:*

My methodological strong points are most easily connected with the depth of the research I conducted. In order to better understand the social and political climate surrounding many of the issues, I researched the background history and location of many of these gendered problems. In addition the time and attention spent gathering information on the social climate of these issues through feminist literature indeed adds to the strength of this paper. Literature provides a vehicle for much knowledge acquisition and is helpful when accessed through a critical lens. One of the strengths in my literature research methods in particular lies in my ability to indicate key players, bias and opinion in this literature. Many of the authors I read were feminine and thus had a very personal stake in the matter. This awareness led to a more critical development of empirical versus opinionated research.

My work with primary sources can be commended for the number of subjects I was able to access with full permission granted by each. I asked pointed, directed questions about feminist feelings and issues facing girls in the community and was able, in most cases, to access this information to a great extent. In addition, the interview sources were varied from the leader of the organization, to volunteers to members of the group. This variation enabled me to access more than one perspective. In each case, I waited until interviewees were comfortable with my presence and the topic at hand before engaging in interviews to remain sensitive to my identity as a white, American female. The care that was put into the methods of these interviews is what achieved such great, raw interview results.

My research methods were flawed in some sense however, in that I was engaging girls with a broad-based dialogue without being an expert or professional in any of the fields. Rather than discussing these issues with HIV/AIDS organizations or gender-based violence hotlines, I simply went straight to the secondary sources to access information about the subject. I think that the data-driven part of my studies would benefit from such engagement as well as the perspective these organizations may have provided me. In addition, my methods were limited by the fact that English is the second language of most of my participants and interviewees, which limited their ability to communicate extensively on the issues. While I did try to ensure that interview subjects were quite comfortable in conversation, there was a certain hesitation to share in most interviews due to the embarrassment or inability to communicate ideas. I hesitated to use a translator however because of



the intense and important nature of the subject at hand and the comfort I wanted each girl to feel talking with me about it.

My literature based research was limited in the number of sources I did access versus the number of sources that exist. I tried to pick very recent and informative sources for my research however; the depth of this issue creates a situation where many sources are available. In addition, most of my feminist literature was written by females themselves, which perhaps limits the number of perspectives granted to the search. Perhaps more South African male feminist perspective could have been incorporated although I found this very hard to locate.

## ***Limitations to the Study***

This study is limited by a number of factors, none of which detract from its overall credibility as a body of academic work. While some of these limitations highlight drawbacks in research, they simply serve to create a basis for further development and study.

First and foremost, this study was limited by the time constraints under which it was conducted. Though it goes without saying, a twelve week curriculum can hardly be implemented in a month, if done so under the established time parameters. Given the limited time, I was only able to implement four out of twelve weeks of the curriculum and therefore only four weeks have been tailored with feedback from the girls and through my observational suggestions. For this reason, only the first four weeks are discussed in the body of this paper, because they are the only ones that provide decent grounds for analytical reporting.

An additional limitation to my study was the language barrier between me and the participants. Given that their first language is Zulu and I am fairly limited in my Zulu-speaking, all sessions were conducted in English. I made the decision to forgo a translator partly for the ease of creating this curriculum, and partly for the sake of soliciting raw data from the group. This perhaps limited the communication between me and interviewees as well as group participants. While conversation flow was fairly consistent it might have developed into a deeper understanding had it been conducted in Zulu.

Another limitation to this study was in my identity as white, female, upper-class, heterosexual, American woman. To hold such privileged lottery cards in a group of disadvantaged students serves to discredit my ability to work with the group and promote meaningful discussion on the topics. To the extent that I can rationalize with the girls that I have done my research and lived in a Zulu family for six weeks, they may still hold some reservations regarding my identity. In addition, there may be some deeply entrenched cultural practices which I have trouble either demystifying or deconstructing due to my inability to understand them. Such a situation limits the effectiveness of my work and the feedback I received from the girls.

Lastly, I feel that my study was limited by some of the particular limits to the flow of information in South Africa. Not being permitted to check books out from the UKZN Howard library, for one, limited my ability to conduct research with those given materials from my home. In addition, not having a car, and with taxis as a more expensive means of transportation, I was less inclined to hunt down small leads to potentially helpful organizations and group meetings. Not understanding the mini bus system indeed hindered my development of research materials as again, I was less inclined to travel about rather than stay at home. In addition, my own inclination to work from home, where I could be more productive, and not spend the whole day in the office, limited my contact with program coordinators about my topic.

## ***Findings and Results***

For each of the four sessions which I created and conducted, I will present my curriculum, findings and analysis in the following format:

First I will insert a copy of the curriculum. This copy will be in lieu of one attached as an appendix. Due to the fairly consistent reference to its contents, I feel that it would benefit the reader to have the curriculum cited within the body of this text.

Following the curriculum, I will rationalize its creation through connection to my literature review, and my background in child development and group facilitation. Each section was created for a specific reason or to serve a purpose and these will be detailed as well.

My discussion will then focus around implementation and feedback on each specific session and some of the aspects of each section that were tailored or doctored specifically to fit the parameters of this group. In this section, I will also give mention to the specific interviews I conducted and how they influenced parts of the curriculum detailed here or in the appendix.

Lastly, I will briefly detail the remaining eight weeks of the curriculum, provide a brief rationale, and an overwhelming theme that they are meant to discuss or highlight.

### **Session 1: Introduction**

#### **Week 1: Introduction to Girls' Group**

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***Abstract:*** This week will focus on building group dynamics and cohesion and serve as an introduction to the overall program. Expectations of both the group facilitator and the participants will be discussed and the facilitator will anonymously solicit further topics for discussion.

***Goals:*** Girls will understand the underlying motivations for development of a gender-specific outlet for discussion. In addition, participants will develop a sense of trust in each other and respect the opinions of others. Girls will speak up about their interests and fears for this program and together move forward into lessons that build courage, control and independence.

***Lesson:***

1. Facilitator introduction:

*The role of the facilitator is to act as a peer mentor to the students, guiding topics and discussion while not dominating conversation, nor passively participating. At this stage, the facilitator should detail any pertinent information about themselves. In addition, the facilitator should explain to the group members why he/she decided to work with this specific program and exhibit an attitude of excitement around future meetings. The tone of this introduction should be casual and excited, evoking a sense of equality rather than an air of superiority.*

2. Participant introduction:

*Participants should be encouraged to introduce themselves in the same manner as the facilitator to maintain an equal power dynamic between all members. Group members will be given the opportunity to share some background information on themselves and also their motivation for joining the group.*

3. Icebreaker game:

*There are a number of icebreaker games that can be played at this point. The purpose of an icebreaker game is to engage individuals in conversation with one another in a casual way. Only one game is truly necessary for each group however, you can play as many as you see fit. These games will help to familiarize group members with one another and to increase the comfort of interacting.*

Icebreaker Games continued

**Two Truths and a Lie:**

*In this game, each player must state two true facts about herself and then one lie. Other players will attempt to determine which statement is false, resulting in players knowing a little more about one another.*

**The Wind Blows (we're all the same):**

*For this game, everyone must have a spot in a circle that is reserved. One way to reserve spots when no chairs are available is to ask each player to take off her shoes and set them in front of her. One spot is removed from the circle and that person starts out in the middle. The girl in the middle will then make a statement that she believes to be true for more than just herself (for instance: "change places if you like ice cream). All circle members who agree with the girl's statement must find a new place in the circle (not next to their original place). The girl in the middle must try and get out of the middle by finding a vacant place in the circle as people move. Once everyone who moved has a new place in the*

circle (except one person) the person left out is the new girl in the middle. She will then make a statement about what she likes and the game continues. The object of this game is to get students to change places with one another and sit next to someone new. In addition, students find out more about one another, and discover that they have some mutual interests and similarities.

**Human Knot:**

For Human Knot, all group members (including the facilitator) should stand shoulder to shoulder in a tight circle. Each member will then be asked to put their right hand out in the middle of the circle and grab the right hand of another circle member (not the person next to them). This process will be repeated for the left hand (although they also cannot grab the right and left hand of the same person). Once everyone is in a "knot" they will then be asked to untangle themselves without letting go of one another. This process involves stepping over and under arms, etc. Eventually all students will be standing in a circle holding hands. The aim of this activity is teamwork. Students must effectively communicate with one another and work together as a team to make this happen. Many times when playing this game, one or two students will emerge as group leaders.

**Charades Telephone:**

In this game, students will stand in a straight line facing one direction (looking at the back of the person in front of them). The person at the very back of the line will tap the person in front of them, who will then turn around. Once the two of them are facing, the first girl will act out something or a dance move (ex: a person will act out sunshine or swimming). Once that is completed, the first girl will turn and face the opposite direction from where she started facing and the second person will tap the girl in front of her. The third girl will turn around and watch the second girl perform the actions of the first girl. The second girl will then face the same direction as the first girl and the action will be passed, slowly, down the line. At the end, the last girl and the first girl will come out in front of everyone and count to three. On "three" they will each perform the action that they started/ received. This game is a silly, fun game that is mostly a way to loosen up a group of students.

**Up/ Down:**

For this game, students will stand in a circle all facing the center. They will be told to look down, and then to look up. When they look up, they must look directly at another person. If that person is looking back at them (making eye contact) they are out. If not, they continue playing the game. The pattern of up/down continues until there are only two players remaining. When only two players remain, they must choose to A) have a scream off (yell as loud as you can for as long as you can, whoever yells longer wins), B) have a talk off (talk as fast and as much as you can without repeating until you run out of things to say. Whomever is still talking last, wins), or C) play "sword fighting" (the two players will lock right hands, but keep their pointer fingers up. The goal is for one player to touch the other with their pointer finger. Each player is simultaneously playing offence and defense trying to touch, but not be touched. The first to touch the other player wins). This game is another game just for fun, to get group members moving and laughing.

4. Safe space creation:

*Safe space creation is integral to the success of this program because it lays the foundation for comfort and ease in future discussions. The components of a safe space are to be determined by the individual group, however some of the necessities are as follows:*

- *What is said in group should not be discussed with anyone outside the group, unless clear permission is granted by the individual sharing. Provisions should be made that specify how permission is obtained. A caveat should exist that provides for the protection of all members of the group (for instance, if someone says they are thinking about suicide, or that they are being raped by their father, this should be reported in a safe, trustworthy way).*
- *The opinion of every member of the group is valued and respected. During discussion it is important to remember that one is arguing not against an individual, but against an idea. This helps to avoid confrontation or conflict on a personal level.*
- *NO PUT DOWNS. No member of the group should ever say anything negative about another group member, ever. If there are conflicts, they should be mediated and discussed, not left to marinate and explode.*

#### Safe Space continued:

*The object of safe space is to create a community between members that is trusted and respected. All girls should make a “safe space contract” and sign it, so that if conflicts arise, this document can remind participants of their intentions. \*note: any discussion of gossip on group issues that occurred outside the group should be addressed immediately. Group members have the right to feel that what is shared during group meetings will not be shared all over town. Girls who gossip should be given a warning followed by a dismissal from group if the gossiping continues. It should be made clear to participants, however, that discussing what they learn in group (HIV statistics, teen pregnancy resources, etc.) should be shared with friends/ communities, and this does not constitute gossiping.*

#### 5. Discussion of program/ facilitator expectations:

*This is the time for the facilitator to lay out the outline of the program while remaining committed to flexibility and what the particular group wants to discuss:*

#### The Program:

This program was created to empower young females in the Cato Manor community. Throughout the last half century in South Africa, politics and social arenas created a patriarchal society. The incidence of male-dominance supports the suppression of women and thus deserves to be challenged. Sexism was highlighted as a significant problem hindering the development of a democratic South Africa in the post-1994 era nonetheless, sexism and gender discrimination remain in the politics of today. Through this program, we will discuss gender discrimination from an individual, national and international point of view

and work to understand the historical location of sexism in South Africa. Pertinent to these discussions is the acknowledgement of gender issues such as HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence, teen pregnancy and marginalization. Not only will this program focus its efforts in understanding sexism, it will also work to empower the young women who take part to stand against sexism. For any member of a democracy, but especially for those in the marginalized majority (women) understanding constitutional rights belongs at the foundation of working to protect those rights. In a society where gender equality is advocated and protected by law, individuals must understand their rights in order to pursue them.

The structure of this program will involve individual meetings that focus on specific issues and information, to motivate and empower young women. Students will discuss oppression in a broad, and then more specific sense, to define the specifics of the problem. Then will then explore their own understanding of sexism in South Africa, and attempt to locate the manifestations and causes of sexism in their own communities. Group members will be challenged with the idea of a marginalized majority, and asked to trace the incidence of such throughout South African history. As a disease with higher incidence in young women than young men, HIV/AIDS treatment, prevention and protection will constitute one of the group sessions. Following a group session on HIV/ AIDS, sexual assault and gender-based violence through the lens of protection and prevention is the focus of one week's lesson. In addition, relationships whether with parents, peers or partners, will receive girls' group attention. Teen pregnancy, prevention, family planning and options will be discussed, given the high rate of teen pregnancy in Kwa-Zulu Natal and moreover, in South Africa. Girls will address the gendered nature of psychological diseases such as anorexia, bulimia and depression to workshop helping themselves and friends. Identity will be discussed as both a concrete and a fluid dynamic, allowing girls to acknowledge how their identity is created and how it can be shaped. Girls will discuss career aspirations and life goals/ planning, focusing on what they need to do to achieve their goals. One session will cover the media's sexualization and objectification of women, to help girls locate the origin of certain impressions on body image and appearance. Lastly, girls will discuss outreach, and plan a service project to reach out to other women in their community. The service project will be executed with the help of group facilitators, with the goal of empowering women through what these girls have learned. Strong leaders in the program will be invited to be trained as peer facilitators for future girls' groups in other communities and schools.

*After laying out the outline of the program, the facilitator should discuss his/her expectations of the group. Expectations should first and foremost be the preservation of the safe space contract. Follow these expectations the facilitator should discuss participation, open-mindedness, and comfort. Identity should also be at the crux of the discussion, acknowledging some of the limitations of a male, or white, or American facilitator. These identity factors should not limit the success of the group in any manner, and this should be made clear. The peer facilitation method should be explained and justified, to create a comfortable dynamic among the group. Any other goals or expectations that the facilitator has for the group should also be detailed at this time.*

6. Solicitation of participant expectations:



*Group members should be encouraged to create a list of their own expectations for the program, the facilitator, and the overall experience. These expectations should be considered and adapted into the specific curriculum, which is always flexible.*

## **Conclusion:**

*The conclusions of this session centers around creating an anonymous suggestion/ question box for the girls. They can submit topics for discussion, questions or suggestions anonymously at the end of every session, which should be explained by the facilitator. In addition, small surveys should be passed out to judge the effectiveness/ impression of the group after 1 session. These can remain anonymous as well but will serve as constructive criticism for the instructor. The girls should be thanked and reminded to come to group again the following week!*

## **Session 1: Curriculum rationalization**

The opening session of this curriculum begins in the most basic of ways, introducing the facilitator and the program participants. This curriculum was designed specifically to be implemented by a peer facilitator partly based on the work of former SIT students Krystal Collier and Samantha Worth. Each girl completed an independent study project that praised the strength of peer facilitation, and specifically, in Collier's case, through the KZN YEP. Peer facilitation was also advocated through the works of feminists Christina Nodmo and Shaamela Cassiem who argue that *"peer-facilitation.. was part of the transformation process central to the girls increasingly assuming leadership roles in development initiatives"* (Nodmo and Cassiem 2002). To this extent, the facilitator's introduction is a model of the introduction of each of the participants in order to create an air of equality. In addition, the facilitator is instructed to detail why she joined girls group to set the stage for the girls to do the same.

A list of icebreaker games is provided next so that the facilitator can begin to engage with the girls while getting to know them. The purpose of an icebreaker game is literally to break the ice, but figuratively to create a bond between facilitators and group members as well as group member to group member. Each game is designed to force girls to get to know each other in a different way, but all have the same goal, to unite the group around a game rather than a serious issue in the beginning. A number of games are outlined however one should be suitable enough. The benefit of detailing a

number of games lies in leaving options for the group leader. Each game serves a slightly different purpose, and thus should be used in conjunction with an assessment of group dynamics.

The next step of the process, safe space creation, remains integral to the success of this group. A safe space is one in which all participants feel that the information they share will be safely coveted among the group members and that their emotional safety will be protected vis-a-vis the others in the group and their opinions. This process is required in order to elicit willing and strong participation from the girls in concurrent sessions, and also develop a sense of connection to the established sisterhood<sup>3</sup>.

In the following section, where the program facilitator explains the format of the group, lays out her expectations and asks the girls to do the same, she is creating an equal power differential between herself and the group participants while simultaneously providing them with information about the group. The object is for the facilitator to lay out the issues that are already covered in this curriculum and to allow girls to interject and make suggestions for additional lessons. This group belongs to the girls who are in it, and should first and foremost cover issues that are important to them, as females. The issues that are already incorporated into this curriculum were done so through a variety of means. Some issues were added to the curriculum due to their explicit gendered nature such as teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence. Others, such as HIV/AIDS were added as further research was formulated about the nature of the subject. Lastly, issues such as sexuality, girl-fighting, female development and depression were added to the curriculum on the basis of requests made by group participants, the likes of which will be discussed later.

The finale part of this session, and all sessions thereafter is to ask girls for anonymous suggestions, questions or comments regarding girls' group. The rationalization for this section is that as girls begin to develop a voice, they may feel more comfortable asking questions out loud. Some however, may never feel comfortable with the questions they would like to ask and would not ask them if not for this anonymous opportunity. This particular rationalization will become clear through the explanation and analysis of the session.

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<sup>3</sup> Researcher's note: At this point I explained to the girls my study and asked their permission to publish the information I gathered anonymously. I gave them a private and public opt-out option, but every girl agreed to have her comments and stories shared.

### Session 1: Findings and Analysis:

This session was likely most nerve wracking for me as a facilitator. Although I have led such groups in the United States, this presented a new and challenging opportunity for study. Before beginning the group session, I went to speak with Malusi, the KZN YEP leader. Malusi offered me some advice about “*not being too extreme*” and walked me over to the Wiggins library where I would meet the girls, and Lynn, my advisor (Mazibuko 2010). At 3:30, two girls sat in the classroom, and thus, two girls made up girls’ group. In such a situation I suddenly had doubts that I was culturally imperialistic to assume that these girls want a different position in society than their mothers, that they want an outlet for discussion of gendered issues. Perhaps my American skin was boiling too quickly over issues that did not concern young women in the community, and therefore was out of place. These concerns were quickly assuaged as three girls walked in late. They were quickly followed by another girl who came, and asked if I remembered her from my previous week in KZN YEP youth group. I had remembered her and I told her I did, and then launched into the lesson. I introduced myself and told the girls that I wanted the most striking thing about my identity to be my identity as a female and not as white or American. For the purposes of this group, I was most concerned about appearing as a leader to the girls because of my American heritage or my white skin, but I wanted the girls to see me as peer-facilitator.

As we moved into icebreaker games, the girls loosened up a bit, and began to discuss who they were. They seemed to enjoy the game and every girl participated. One thing that I have noticed about these girls that aligns with my research is that they are quite reserved in a community space, but seem to open up in areas of individual confrontation. This fuels the argument that women neglect to participate in civil society, as they would observably be reserved in a public space (Britton and Fish 2002). The girls did not refuse to participate in any cavalier manner; they simply appeared to lack the confidence to do so. The icebreaker game I chose to use with the girls was “Two truths and a lie,” because I felt that the level of engagement in this game can involve even the shyest of participants. As we played, two more girls entered the room, to cap of my numbers for the day at seven girls, me and Lynn. The game required some additional prompting, and thus I amended the curriculum to suggest that only one game is truly necessary to break the ice.

Following the icebreaker, safe space construction seemed to appease some of the girls' tensions and also perceived fears about the group. "You mean, it's like a pact?" one girl asked as I discussed the importance of secrecy. She followed this statement by agreeing that a pact among girls was exactly what she wanted and the others agreed. This was pleasing as it was the part of the whole group facilitation that cements the relationship between girls, and with their leader. The girls all agreed that for the purposes of my curriculum and this project, it was okay to report on their comments and the events of girls' group, if their identities remained anonymous.

While I laid out my expectations of the group, and explicitly detailed the make-up of the subsequent sessions, I explained to the girls that this group was created for them, and that they are in control of where it takes them. The explanation went flawlessly, and time was of the essence, so I moved on to soliciting questions, topics for discussion and answers to my question "why did you come to girls' group?" Although each girl had the opportunity to share this publicly in the beginning of the session, I wanted to give the girls a voluntary second chance to share their feelings privately, in case public expression is uncomfortable. What follows are some of the responses:

*- "What is HIV and Aids?"*

*- "Non-sexual active. How can I keep it this way, because my boyfriend want us to have sex?"*

*- "Why must people stop smoking?"*

*- "What if your brother is HIV positive and ask you not to tell your mother, what should you do?"*

*- "I would want us tot talk about women not liking to help each other but choosing to laugh at each other at all times. Not knowing that life goes on and we will need each other one day!"*

*- "I came here as a woman to know more about myself (to discover). It's great to share views with other women"*

*- "I'm here to have more information about women's right and to have some good issues from other teenagers"*

*- "Well I came here to get empowered 'cause if it has to do with females I'm totally cool with it. I came 'cause I want to feel like I belong, belonging is important to me, it give me a sense of value. What I'd*

*like to see in the group is our numbers doubling, honesty amongst the girls, and a strong bond. I wish that the group could grow into a more welcoming and warm place like a comfort zone where we can speak and not be judged. Girl Power”*

*-“Can we talk about sexuality and bisexuality and stuff like that?”*

The comments these girls made were not taken lightly in lieu of the fact that many were personal and contained valuable clues implicitly directing the structure of the group. HIV/AIDS as a gendered disease was already at the top of my discussion topics, and its position in the curriculum was simply affirmed by these questions. After reading through the girls’ questions and opinions, one of the conflicts I faced was again the idea of cultural imperialism. In answering their questions, I decided to mitigate this feeling by presenting my opinion, and then asking for the opinions of others. This process will be made clearer through the discussion of the second lesson.

As far as issue acquisition goes, I decided to create a lesson on sexuality and sexual preference and to link this lesson with the concept of identity. My original plan was to avoid sexuality as a discussion topic, since it is an issue that knows no gender and furthermore, remains sensitive among youth in South Africa. My experiences with young women in South Africa and sexuality have affirmed that there is little place for such a discussion among peers. I was excited to see this question, and developed my sexuality lesson around the idea of identity as a whole. This way, if girls are not particularly receptive to sexuality discussions, at least they can spend time developing questions about identity.

The issue of sexual activity resonates through a number of lessons that I already have planned, but I decided to order the lessons to discuss personal control over one’s body within the first three lessons. Self-control and control of your own body lie at the foundation of issues such as gender-based violence, teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS and therefore it requires extensive discussion and acknowledgement. “Lesson 3: My Body is Mine” is designed to address these issues of personal control over your own body.

As for the girls’ responses about why they came to girls’ group, they were the answers that I wanted to hear. I would truly like to believe that these answers speak honestly their feelings about group, and the aspirations they will get out of it. In later interviews, I discovered that very few girls

ever had the opportunity to join an all girls group before, and if they had, it was directed through their church. For many of these young women, therefore, this curriculum presented their first opportunity for female-focused empowerment, their first chance to gain knowledge about gendered subjects and formulate opinions supported by other women. I am both impressed and proud of the goals presented by these young ladies, and hope that my curriculum meets this challenge head on.

## Session 2: HIV/AIDS

### Week 2: HIV/AIDS

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\*Note: for this lesson and all subsequent lessons, activities suggested are presented with the caveat that they may not all fit into a one-hour session. For this reason, facilitators should choose activities based upon perceived group reception and reaction.

**Abstract:** This lesson is meant to engage girls in a discussion of HIV and AIDS. It will demystify the disease and discuss prevention, treatment and impact. It is important for the girls to understand the gendered nature of HIV in South Africa and what factors contribute to this phenomenon.

**Goals:** The goal of this lesson is to once again, bring the group close together as a sisterhood to discuss issues that are pertinent to their living situations. Girls will begin to develop an understanding of HIV as a gendered disease. They will understand what HIV is as a disease, how it affects communities and also methods of prevention and treatment.

#### Lesson:

##### 1. Recap last lesson

Allow a short period of time in the beginning of each session to recapitulate the last lesson. If girls have any outstanding questions, or you have anything you need to say, say it now. This is a time for moving past that lesson, and should not take up more than 5-10 minutes. The purpose of revisiting the issues from last week is to remind girls that these issues should always stay in our minds, and to check in on girls who might still be processing what they heard/saw/learned.

➔ Last week we discussed the purposes of this group and what we as individuals and as a group want out of it. We decided that we would form a sisterhood, and share with one another but not outside of this group. Some of the topics for future lessons will be: HIV, pregnancy, my body is mine, relationships, sexuality, gender-based violence, girl fighting/ allies and a service project. We came to girls' group for a variety of reasons but the thing we all have in common is that we all want to live as strong, powerful young women.

➔ Solicit questions now: any thoughts about last time that anyone would like to share. (remember to keep things brief)

##### 2. Respond to question box

The question box questions should be brought up at this time to remind girls that you are listening to them. Answer any and all questions from last week to the best of your ability and

allow for some discussion. Questions are meant to provoke girls to think about the issues or questions of individuals in their own group. Remind girls that they will have a chance to add questions to the question box at the end of each session.

### 3. Icebreaker games

Icebreaker games are important to this session as well because the girls are still only getting to know one another. As the weeks go by the girls will become closer and these kinds of activities will not be needed. For now, they remain important, in part, to cement the role of the facilitator as a member of the group. The game played this week should involve girls developing an explicit connection, or link, between one another.

#### **Linking Arms:**

The focus of this activity is for girls to find commonalities between one another. For this game, every member should stand in a circle. The first person should turn to the person next to her and ask questions until the two girls find something they have in common. Once they have a commonality, they should link arms. The second person should then carry on in the same manor until all group members are standing in a circle, linked together. Girls should then discuss the way that they are all interconnected because a common link was found that unites them all through one another. The game should be played a second time through, after everyone switches places, to further emphasize the mentality of being “linked.”

#### **Trust Falls:**

Trust falls should only be used in a group where the facilitator is comfortable with the group members' support for one another. If the facilitator is confident that all girls support each other, this game can be a great one to develop a bond between participants. Girls should chose a partner and stand back to front, both facing the same direction. The person in the back should assume the “spotter position” about 5 inches behind their partner. The spotter position requires that one foot is in front of the other (the person is standing in a lunge) and hands are up in the air, palms open, facing the partner's back. The partner should then be asked to lean back, and the spotter will gently catch them and push them back upright. If the partners feel comfortable, the spotter can progressively move further back, creating a greater dynamic of trust. Once the first person has fallen back a number of times, the two should switch positions.

A variation on this activity is a “trust circle.” In a trust circle, all group members (10 maximum) will stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder with one person in the middle. Every member of the outer circle should assume the “spotter position” and the person in the middle should close their eyes and fall (forward or backwards). As she is caught, other group members should gently push the girl in the middle back toward another part of the circle, falling in a different direction. This should go on for a few turns and then a new girl should go in the middle. The object of this activity is for girls to discover that they all create a support system for one another, literally and figuratively. The facilitator should engage in these activities with the girls as well, signaling to the girls that everyone in this group is part of the support system.

### 4. HIV as a disease



**Background of the problem (for the facilitator's information):**

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency virus) is an autoimmune disease that contributes to many deaths each year all over the world. The nature of the disease in South Africa presents HIV as a gendered issue, especially among young people, under the age of 24. In 2008, a South African girl aged 14-19 was three times as likely to be living with HIV then a boy of the same age. For the population aged 20-24, girls are four times as likely. This illustrates that young girls need to know more about HIV. For the purposes of this lesson, your position is not to preach to students, but to inform them, in the most tangible way, about the disease.

These questions are meant to engage students in a discussion of HIV, while allowing the facilitator to fill in the gaps:

*What do you already know about HIV?*

- ➔ Students should be aware that HIV is a disease that is located in the blood and other bodily fluids. The facilitator can choose to explain to the girls how HIV works to attack a person's immune system, if the situation merits. [As a virus, HIV works to attack the specific cells in the human body that work to keep the immune system healthy and strong. The position of HIV as a retrovirus means that it can effectively copy itself through the human body, destroying or altering host cells. As the host cells are altered or destroyed, a person's immune system becomes very weak, causing them to get sick more easily.]
- ➔ Students should recognize that HIV is present in the blood, breast milk, vaginal fluids and seamen. Methods of contraction should be identified as any activities where these fluids from one person's body enter another person's body. HIV cannot be spread through: sharing water glasses, using the same toilet seat, high fives and hugs.

*What are methods of prevention?*

- ➔ HIV is a highly preventable disease. Because it is carried in the blood, and other bodily fluids, protective barriers exist to stop the transmission of the disease. Condoms are the best form of protection against HIV transmission sexually (this includes oral sex or any activity where seamen/ vaginal secretions will be exchanged) although abstinence is the only totally effective method. Transmission through blood can be blocked by wearing latex gloves and avoiding another person's blood coming into contact with open wounds/ sores, etc. HIV is preventable from mother to child by switch from breast milk to formula if the mother knows her status is HIV positive.

*How is HIV treated?*

HIV is treated through an antiretroviral therapy that involves routine pill schedules. The pills work by fighting against the copying enzyme in the virus suppressing overly active copying. Because the virus mutates, higher and more frequent doses are necessary as HIV progresses into AIDS. For

treatment to be most effective, a patient must take the ARVs at the time/ frequency prescribed by the doctor. HIV can also be managed through diet and exercise by keeping the body health through natural means. Alcohol is an immunosuppressant and should be avoided whenever possible.

*Who can supply home-based care?*

Anyone can supply home-based care, and HIV patients do not need to be isolated. Home based care is as simple as working to remove all potential pathogens from the area as much as possible. This requires keeping everything at home very clean and sanitary as well as working to keep HIV positive persons away from anyone who is sick. If someone who is HIV positive does become more sick, or come down with a fever, doctors should be contacted immediately.

*How do we see people with HIV?*

This is an open-ended question meant to illicit discussion about the perceptions of HIV, and locates the source of those perceptions. For instance, some schools characterize HIV as a disease linked to sexual promiscuity and deviant behavior. While this may be true at times, it is not universally true and serves an example of determining the location of an opinion. This portion is meant to challenge girls to come up with the stereotypes and social norms associated with HIV.

5. HIV in pictures- who has it, who doesn't?

Can you tell who has HIV by a name? By a face? During this activity, girls will first establish their visions of HIV/AIDS and then confront them. The facilitator will show girls pictures of people known (by the facilitator) to be HIV positive or negative and ask the girls to guess which is which. Once girls guess, they will be asked "why" they believe a person has a certain status. This activity will be repeated with names of persons known to be HIV positive or negative to reinforce notions of who stereotypically has AIDS.

In an attempt to confront beliefs, girls will then be given crayons to draw a picture of an HIV positive person and a negative person. The girls will likely struggle with this activity and look to the facilitator for questions. It is helpful if the facilitator has pre-drawn pictures to share with the girls, when provoked. One useful tool in this activity would be to draw the exact same person for someone who has HIV and someone who doesn't have HIV.

Who Has HIV?	Who Doesn't Have HIV?
Amanda Black	Zola Matiwane
Richard Frank	Gladdys Matiwane
Néstor Almendros	Debbie Merzbach
Jorge Bolet	Sara Ramsay
Simon Nkoli	Langa Mchunu
Nkosi Johnson	Shola Haricharan
Umanji	Hannah Lafleur



[http://sureshg.files.wordpress.com/2007/02/dsc\\_3042-1.JPG](http://sureshg.files.wordpress.com/2007/02/dsc_3042-1.JPG)



<http://www.topnews.in/files/Amy~>



<http://www.pulledmygroin.com/images/254.jpg>

## 6. Handprints of empowerment

This activity is meant to make girls think about their own personal convictions about HIV and AIDS. It will combine the formative information they have gathered through the previous activities and utilize them to develop their own set of convictions. Each girl will be given a piece of paper and a pen, and asked to trace her left hand. Starting with her ring finger, she will write a promise to herself regarding HIV/AIDS on each finger, “marrying” these commitments to her person. For girls who want to share these commitments, they are more than welcome to if they do not want to share, do not push them to. The real benefit of the activity lies in the commitments they make to themselves and their reflections on how they will or will not let HIV impact their own lives. The facilitator should make a model hand before the group meeting, to share with the girls. Suggestions on what to add are as follows: I will get tested. I will remember that people with HIV can live normal lives. I will always use protection during sex. I will tell my friends and neighbors about what I learned in group. I will be an ally to those with HIV/AIDS. I will learn more about home-based care and help out in my community. I will not have sex until I am married and know his status.

Once finished with their hands, the girls should reflect on the decisions they made, and how it is possible to keep these covenants with themselves. Help them in any way possible to discover what it means to keep these commitments.

## 7. HIV bingo

HIV bingo is meant to be a fun activity that unites knowledge with a fun game. Bring in a prize, if possible, for the winner (or everyone) to incentivize real attention to the game. Each girl is given an HIV bingo board, and a pen. The girls must then fill in all the answers they know, as quickly as possible. The first girl with her whole board filled, wins. They may ask questions, if they would like, in order to fill the boards, but push them to use one another as allies before they come to you. (at the end of document)

## **Conclusion:**

Conclude today’s workshop with letting the girls know about some of the resources they have available in their own area. Provide them with a list of places that work with people with HIV/AIDS and outreach and emphasize the importance of getting tested. Describe it as a right, and explain that everyone has the right to know his or her status. Knowing your HIV status can become a very empowering thing whether it is positive or negative because that way, you are in control. Finish the lesson once again with the anonymous question box.

HIV/AIDS Bingo

What Does HIV stand for?	Name one fluid that carries HIV:	True or False (circle one): I can get HIV from sharing a water glass with someone who is HIV positive?	HIV affects _____ times the number of girls than boys ages 14-19.	What kind of virus is HIV classified as?
How does HIV affect cells?	What country is known to have the most people living with HIV?	Can I get HIV from oral sex?	Name another fluid that carries HIV:	What is drug called that treats HIV?
Name another fluid that carries HIV.	What kills the most people with AIDS?	True or False (circle one): You can provide home-based care.	Does everyone have a right to know their status?	Where can you get tested?
What is one way to naturally keep your body healthy when you have HIV?	HIV affects _____ as many girls than boys ages 20-24	AIDS stands for:	Is HIV a new or old disease?	If an HIV patient at home gets sick, what should you do?
Name another fluid that transmits HIV:L	Name a protective barrier:	True or false: if I use a condom, I will never get HIV.	How often should you be tested for HIV?	What is the function of the immune system?

## Resources in Durban, South Africa:

- Kathleen Voysey clinic

Presbyterian Church in Berea Road

Thursdays 8am-1pm

Should you require further information or should you be able assist in any way, please contact **Chris Gibson** on (031) 266-6464, **Brenda Serviatis** on (031) 312-7967 or **Jane Clark** on (031) 201-2668.

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## Session 2: Curriculum rationalization

The theme of this lesson is HIV/AIDs, and was chosen as such, because of the gendered nature of this disease among young South Africans and additionally because of the anonymous questions solicited in the previous week. Internationally, HIV/AIDS prevalence is characteristically lower among women than among men. In South Africa however, and especially among young people, this is not the case. Young women are as many as four times as likely to be living with HIV than young men, presenting the gendered nature of the disease (“Estimated HIV Prevalence among South Africans...” 2008). As the goal of this lesson appropriately states, my desire is for the girls to confront the gendered nature of this disease, and embrace it as a women’s issue that remains in their control.

As the second lesson in this twelve week session, the beginning of this lesson bares mention to the specifics of recapitulating the previous week’s work and activities. More specifically, this lesson dictates that some of the expressed desires and concerns for the previous week are reiterated, in order to impress upon the girls the sense that the group is theirs to mold, and that the facilitator is listening. This activity leaves room for group member participation in case any members were left with unsettled issues after the last meeting. This step concludes with answering and addressing the questions and comments received in the anonymous question box the previous week. Aforementioned, is the importance of structuring the anonymous question section to reflect a discussion. This particular nuance was adopted following the questions and suggestions I received after my first meeting with the girls. I felt that while the girls were soliciting my advice on these questions, it was inappropriate and insensitive not to listen to their opinions as well. The question about a brother with HIV/AIDS triggered this reaction given my initial inclination to respond to the question in a way that might threaten certain cultural norms and thus, discredit my further positions elsewhere.

I next suggest another icebreaker game, to open up group dialogue and debate and yet again, develop bonds and linkages between the girls. The express purpose of these games is comfort and thus, the vibe of the group will indicate which games to play and when the group is ready to move on from games. It was once suggested to me that these girls perhaps already know each other, and moreover, these games might be a waste of time. I am quick to dispel this notion on the grounds that such games are obviously optional and part of their role in my initial sessions was also for the girls to

find comfort in my role as a peer facilitator. I developed this lesson to incorporate games to reaffirm comfort from the previous week.

The next section strives to empower girls with information about HIV in a discussion-based setting. The premise of this curriculum is that it hinges on the principle that discussion and engagement with information and material will lead to a greater sense of empowerment. For this reason, the model for information acquisition is explicitly presented in a way that discourages a lecture format. The information provided in the curriculum is of utmost importance but should be conveyed in a discussion-based manner. The questions I provided to develop a framework for understanding the disease were derived through my research regarding its nature and awareness. Based on my findings that the number of people with *“correct knowledge about prevention of sexual transmission of HIV,”* has declined, I felt that the informational aspect of this lesson must be presented in an informative, engaging way (“Awareness...” 2008). For this reason, I chose to provide the peer facilitator with information I deemed essential to the suppression of transmission of the disease.

In this first activity on HIV/AIDS, as well as the activity that follows, I strive to examine stereotypes and misgivings about individuals with HIV/AIDS in order to remove some of the stigmatism from these individuals. The motivation for this section was derived from two sources, each distinctly different and yet, drawing upon the same conclusion that a lack of information can lead to isolation or mistreatment of HIV patients. The first experience that motivated this session was an experience outside Pietermaritzburg at a clinic for home-based care. Observation of this session informed me that many of the individuals present knew little about disease prevention or treatment before the clinic. While this may not represent a universal perspective in South Africa, it indicates clear room for growth. Individuals admitted to believing that HIV patients required isolation to keep from spreading the disease and in some communities, HIV positive individuals are killed to prevent disease transmission. Similarly, *Agenda* journal and *Destiny* magazine paint a picture of those infected by HIV/AIDS fearing and confronting isolation. For young girls, people with the opportunity to change and shape perceptions of the future, deconstructing these stereotypes can change the culture of the future.



The activity “handprints of empowerment” serves to help the girls apply the information from the lesson to their lives. Information is just facts, if it does not serve a purpose, or if it is too abstract. In this activity therefore, girls will confront linking information they learned to their own lives. This activity also strives to engender a sense of control in preventing or monitoring the disease by asking girls to make promises to themselves. The reason I chose to use a handprint for this activity derives from the significance of a wedding band. A marriage is a promise made between two people, where I have created an analogy of the girls making promises to themselves. Each finger they write on represents a marriage between the girl and her idea or new found conviction that visually depicts an image of self and self control.

The final activity in this lesson I created as an informative game so that girls will test their own knowledge of the disease, and have a copy of this information at the end of the lesson. HIV bingo is meant not only to challenge the girls during the lesson, but remain a point of reference outside of group. One of the ways this group will be most effective in the community is through the dissemination of information. Girls in group sharing information and what they learned with girls outside of group will ignite a ripple effect, where more than just these girls are affected. To this end, for girls to have a physical copy of correct, important information remains paramount to this procedure.

## **Session 2: Findings and Analysis:**

One of the most striking aspects of the beginning of this lesson was the increase in group participation from last week. Although only two extra girls were in attendance, I was thrilled by the excited group of returners. The lesson commenced with a short discussion on the previous week, to which the girls had little to add, and moved into acknowledgment and discussion of the questions. Through my consultation of HIV/AIDS counseling materials, I became more comfortable with my decision to share my opinion on the question regarding the HIV positive brother (Dyk 2008). This part of her brother’s identity he shared as a matter of trust and privacy, and thus, was not her information to share. What I suggested to the girls was that this secret was a matter of privacy, and was not appropriate to tell others. To that end, I suggested that if the individual girl was uncomfortable not

telling her mother, she should encourage her brother to do so, and I added that through this lesson she would hopefully gain a better perspective on how to support her brother. The group had mixed opinions on the matter, however many agreed that the best course of action was to keep the secret. In this way, my worries about overstepping cultural boundaries were assuaged by the girls' affirmation that my opinion was valued, but not indisputably correct.

We neglected to belabor this point too much, and I briefly addressed the issue of smoking, educating the girls about lung cancer, throat cancer, mouth cancer and emphysema. I was surprised to find that the girls knew about the risks of cancer, but did not understand what contributed to the cancer. I told the girls about tar and the addiction of nicotine and judging by their shocked expressions and the questions they asked, I trusted they listened and were influenced by my explanation. When I approached the topic of discussion for this lesson, there were mixed reactions among the group. Some girls appeared relieved or excited by the subject, but one response in particular challenged the premise of the whole lesson. She was a tall, assertive young lady who admitted that *"I kind of think that AIDS is overrated."* Shocked and a little put off by this blatant attack of my lesson plan, I confidently asserted that I would try and change her mind. Rather than beginning the lesson with the first question in part one, I delved into a discussion on the gendered nature of HIV. I asked the girls if they had any idea of the magnitude of the incidence among women than among men. When they admitted they did not, I revealed my academic findings (4:1 incidence among women to men 20-24 yrs).

Many of the girls were surprised by these numbers, and they were even more startled to discover their inconsistency on an international level. Because many factors contribute to these high numbers, I asked the girls to brainstorm where the potential causes of this inequality lie. My research indicated that between the higher population of males with multiple concurrent partners, and the greater number of female rape victims, these numbers contribute to the higher incidence among females than males. The girls had a number of explanations, some of which touched on the idea of multiple concurrent partners, and some which discussed the issue of *trust* that often lies at the apex of the decision whether or not a man will wear a condom. Much to my surprise, none of the girls brought up rape as one of the contributing factors. When I mentioned it, the girls seemed half-heartedly receptive to the idea, more interested in some of the other social contributors. What I was

able to impress upon the girls through this discussion is the control that each girl has (outside of rape situations) over whether or not she has sex with a man without a condom. The issue of *trust* that the girls brought up, spurred a discussion about respect during a relationship and how any girl has the right to refuse sex without a condom.

Following this discussion, I began to realize that time was of the essence, and I would not make it through every lesson for the day. This reality contributed to the editor's note at the top of lesson 2 that states *"for this lesson and all subsequent lessons, activities suggested are presented with the caveat that they may not all fit into a one-hour session. For this reason, facilitators should chose activities based upon perceived group reception and reaction."* I have encouraged facilitators to use their own discretion about the activities that they choose, but provided a spectrum of options that are implemented in different methods. I made the decision in this situation to utilize the activity "hands of empowerment" and to give the girls "HIV bingo" to complete at home. I briefly debated the homework assignment and settled on making it optional, given the optional nature of this group, and the girls' individual desires for knowledge and empowerment.

"Hands of Empowerment" was an incredibly successful activity in which each girl made her own set of promises to herself, fully aware that these were promises she intended to keep. I was proud of the manner in which the girls completed this task independently and lightheartedly. Each girl appeared to think through her options, and be proud to make her hand her own. Some of the promises the girls made are as follows:

-*"I will get tested"*

-*"I will empower others to get tested"*

-*"I will let my boyfriend know"*

-*"I promise to love and support my friends and family who are HIV positive"*

- *"I promise to always use a condom when I have sex"*

-*"I'll tell others about HIV transmission, homosexual and heterosexual"*

-*"I'll be open about my status whether it is negative or positive"*

*-“I will treat someone with HIV the same as someone who is HIV negative”*

These statements reflected a high level of understanding and listening from the lessons of today. My goals for the lesson were not simply to impart information on the girls, but also to motivate them to make use of the information they were given. The results of this activity proved to me that these girls were ready to take control of their future with respect to this disease.

The girls' responses to anonymous question box were fewer than the previous week, but nonetheless meaningful. Two suggestions toyed with the idea of psychological diseases such as depression and anorexia which have now become an independent lesson. One girl asked to discuss female development and although no specific context was noted, I combined this discussing with the unit on sexuality.

## Lesson 3: My Body is Mine

### Week 3: My Body is Mine

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**Abstract:** This lesson aims to help girls instill a sense of pride in their own bodies and recognize that they have the power to make decisions about themselves. Girls will discuss Eve Ensler poem “My Short Skirt” and respond to it as they see fit. Girls will have the opportunity to write their own spoken word or slam poems, which they can choose to complete at home, or in the session. Girls will make “my body is mine” bracelets to wear that remind them of this creed. The session will conclude with girls working together to come up with a list of how they want to be seen and how they do not want to be seen. Girls will sign the paper thereby agreeing that they will not tolerate hearing other girls seen as the negative aspects, and they will work to portray their sex as the positive ones.

**Goals:** The goals of this lesson are to build a strong sense of commitment to self through discussing both body image and perceptions of body image. Girls will develop a sense of pride in who they are, but also recognize that they are in control of who they are and how they are viewed by society. Girls will develop a sense of responsibility for self and also for females in general.

#### Lesson:

##### 8. Recap last lesson

Allow a short period of time in the beginning of each session to recapitulate the last lesson. If girls have any outstanding questions, or you have anything you need to say, say it now. This is a time for moving past that lesson, and should not take up more than 5-10 minutes. The purpose of revisiting the issues from last week is to remind girls that these issues should always stay in our minds, and to check in on girls who might still be processing what they heard/saw/learned.

➔ Last week we discussed HIV/AIDS in the context of South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal. We made contracts with ourselves regarding HIV/AIDS and we played HIV/AIDS bingo. We discussed the prevalence of HIV among women and discussed why we think HIV is a gender-based disease. We learned about modes of transmission, prevention and treatment for HIV, and talked about how people with HIV/AIDS in our community are perceived.

➔ Solicit any questions and comments about last lesson and ask the girls how they liked it.

##### 9. Respond to question box

The question box questions should be brought up at this time, to remind girls that you are listening to them. Answer any and all questions from last week to the best of your ability and allow for some discussion. Questions are meant to provoke girls to think about the issues or questions of individuals in their own group. Remind girls that they will have a chance to add questions to the question box at the end of each session.

1. “My Short Skirt”- Eve Ensler

Read this Eve Ensler poem out loud to the group. Make sure to speak loudly and clearly so they understand the amount of strength and power this poem motivates. Once you have read it through once, pass it between the girls and have them each read a section out loud.

It is not an invitation  
a provocation  
an indication  
that I want it  
or give it  
or that I hook.

My short skirt  
is not begging for it  
it does not want you  
to rip it off me  
or pull it down.

My short skirt  
is not a legal reason  
for raping me  
although it has been before  
it will not hold up  
in the new court.

My short skirt, believe it or not  
has nothing to do with you.

My short skirt  
is about discovering  
the power of my lower calves  
about cool autumn air traveling  
up my inner thighs  
about allowing everything I see  
or pass or feel to live inside.

My short skirt is not proof  
that I am stupid  
or undecided  
or a malleable little girl.

My short skirt is my defiance  
I will not let you make me afraid  
My short skirt is not showing off  
this is who I am  
before you made me cover it  
or tone it down.  
Get used to it.

My short skirt is happiness  
I can feel myself on the ground.  
I am here. I am hot.

My short skirt is a liberation  
flag in the women's army  
I declare these streets, any streets  
my vagina's country.

My short skirt  
is turquoise water  
with swimming colored fish  
a summer festival  
in the starry dark  
a bird calling  
a train arriving in a foreign town  
my short skirt is a wild spin  
a full breath  
a tango dip  
my short skirt is  
initiation  
appreciation  
excitation.

But mainly my short skirt  
and everything under it  
is Mine.  
Mine.  
Mine.



Once you have finished reading the poem through twice, discuss its meaning in terms of girls reclaiming self image. Give each girl a copy of the poem to keep. If possible, while discussing, give the girls some colored paper and crayons to decorate their poems with and make them unique. Some possible questions for discussion:

- ➔ *What do you think Eve Ensler wanted girls to know when she wrote this poem?*
- ➔ *How did this poem make you feel?*
- ➔ *Who do you believe the speaker of the poem is addressing?*
- ➔ *What can we learn from this poem?*
- ➔ *Do you think other girls should read this?*
- ➔ *What do you think a male's reaction would be to reading this poem?*
- ➔ *What is your favorite line and why?*

Make sure that as you are having this discussion, you remind the girls of the safe space rules. Remember also, that this is a discussion they must have among themselves with you included, but that does not mean your opinions or thoughts are more valid. The object of this discussion is for girls to understand that their body belongs to them, and that they are in total control of their bodies.

Once you have discussed the poem, give the girls the opportunity to write their own spoken word or empowered poems about who they are and what they think about a topic. If you think it will help, create your own poem beforehand to guide them. If the girls do not want to write poems, or would like to take a lot of time, allow them to bring them home and present them at the next meeting if they so choose.

Sample facilitator's poem: "My Body is Mine" by Judy Merzbach

My Body is Mine.  
That's right, and you can't have it.  
Unless I say so.  
I don't care what you say  
About what I wear  
About how I stand  
Or how I just looked at you  
You have no right  
NO RIGHT  
To objectify me,

To defy me,  
To deny me  
The right to be human.  
Because this,  
This golden temple  
Of all that is great about me  
Belongs to me.

## 2. My Body is Mine bracelets

These bracelets can be made from string or from beads, whichever is easier for the facilitator to obtain. The facilitator should collect enough of one or the other material for all girls to make a bracelet.

With the *string bracelets*, girls should take three strings from which to make a braid. Each string should represent a different commitment each girl makes to herself about keeping “my body mine.” The girls should then tie the bracelets on one another, agreeing that they will work as allies for each other.

For *beaded bracelets*, girls should take a number of beads, each representing a promise she makes to herself. The promises the girls make should be examples of how they are going to or would like to take control of their lives. This can have anything to do with their identity (ex: “I’m going to go to college because my body is mine,” “I will not let anyone objectify me because my body is mine”). Once the girls have finished their bracelets, they should tie them on one another’s wrists. The girls should discuss what it means to be allies, as they tie these bracelets on, and how they will stand up for each other.

## 3. A Bracelet for a Friend

In this exercise, girls will repeat the previous activity but this time, construct a bracelet for a friend. The friend each girl chooses should be someone outside the group, who they think would benefit from speaking about control and identity. Girls should then agree to share this bracelet and the message along with another girl outside the group when they give the bracelet away. You should suggest that if they are so inclined, they should also share the Eve Ensler poem with this friend, to further discussion on the bracelet.

#### 4. A Contract Among Allies:

The final activity for today's lesson is to develop a contract among allies. Using the lessons learned from "My Short Skirt," girls should develop a list of ways that they would like to be seen, and ways they would not like to be seen. These suggestions can be as many or as few as the girls can come up with, but should all serve the purpose of claiming particular traits for the female sex, and abandoning others. The list of words/phrases that the girls reject should make them feel a sense of control from being able to throw away certain words. Present it to them as though they get to modify the English language to take certain words or phrases out of usage. For the words that they use to describe themselves, present them with the challenge of explaining to someone from outer space who did not know what it meant to be "male" or "female," what it means to be a girl. Here are some suggestions to provoke discussion:

To Be a Girl	Rejected from Girl Vocabulary
Strong	Slut
Empowered	She's Asking for it
Sweet	Weak
Helpful	Serves me

Once the girls have completed a two-columned list, they should all sign it, agreeing to respect and represent these values to the best of their abilities. In addition, girls should agree to stand up against others using the rejected vocabulary, reminding them instead, of the acceptable vocabulary. The goal of this exercise is to see being a girl as an honorable, proud, powerful identity. Girls should recognize their common girlhood, and work to steer and protect public perceptions of females.

**Conclusion:** Conclude the lesson once again by asking for any comments or questions and opening up the anonymous question/ comment box. Hand out a small survey at this point to evaluate the impressions the girls have of the group.

Girls Group Survey: Week 3

1. I feel that I have learned a lot in girls group:

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (yes)

Comments:

2. I feel that the group leader has done a good job:

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (yes)

Comments:

3. I like the topics that we have discussed so far:

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (yes)

Comments:

4. I would tell a friend to join girls' group:

Yes

No

Comments:

**Session 3: Curriculum rationalization**

The first portion of this lesson mirrors the beginning of the previous lesson, and is consistent throughout all the succeeding sessions. The reasons for the continuation of this procedure are to both establish some continuity between sessions, and to encourage the girls to take time to process each lesson. By revisiting the proceeding lesson at the beginning of the new lesson it encourages girls to dwell on the issues for an entire week. In addition, the question box remains an important part of the lesson, based upon whether or not the girls choose to engage with it. Either way, acknowledging this space reminds girls that they can express any and all ideas in group, even if they are not comfortable doing so verbally.

This week's lesson on personal control and independence was designed to motivate girls to take responsibility for both their bodies and their actions. This lesson is the first part of a two-session lesson aimed at working against gender-based violence. The first part ("my body is mine") develops a sense of self control and ownership for one's own body. The second part looks at the issue of gender based violence and confronts some of the causes and locations of the problem. Because of the frequency of gender-based violence, and the need to confront it at a local, personal level as well as a national level, I feel the efficacy of a two-part curriculum is much greater than a single session.

The session begins with a look at one of my favorite poems to epitomize self-control and ownership. This poem, by Eve Ensler, speaks to the nature of a person's body as truly her own. Ensler confronts stereotypes and rejects stigmatizations of women and girls in her declaration of self-worth and personal convictions. I chose this poem not only because it is one of my favorites, but because it transcends the intersections of race, religion, sexuality and social class to speak specifically to the notion of gender. In addition, the poem's diction is accessible both to English as a first and second language students, with many basic words that combine to form a strong, concrete meaning. I chose to introduce the poem through the voice of the facilitator to display the power and conviction with which the poem should be read. Following the facilitator's reading, I include a space for the group members to take turns reading parts of the poem in order to harness the power and energy of the poem for themselves. The idea here is that when group members mimic the style and tone of the facilitator, they will feel a strength and passion as well as claim the words for their own.

The discussion of this poem centers on asking girls to concretely conceptualize the topics and mood of this poem in order to discuss the way that Eve Ensler feels about her body and self control/ownership. The questions asked are meant to provoke girls to discuss the way they feel about their bodies after reading this poem versus the way that society sees their bodies. These leading questions develop a discussion of both the hypothetical and literal through the poem, and thereby allow girls to make figurative suggestions if they are not comfortable with the literal. Moreover, the conclusion of this lesson that challenges girls to create their own spoke-word poems seeks to develop the girls impressions and feelings on the poem into a sense of true empowerment.

Akin to the promise hands of last week, girls are asked to make a literal display of their newly empowered status. The creativity involved in this activity, and that which resonates throughout the

curriculum is set to present girls with a new way of expressing their feelings about certain ideas and meanwhile remind them of the lessons they learned in group. These bracelets are no exception to the creativity method and are to elicit questions and support outside of group. The rationalization behind making a bracelet from a friend is to spread the information and knowledge that the girls learned in group to others in the community. Whether or not the friend attends the group session, she will receive a bracelet that represents the values of our group.

The next activity in the curriculum strives to look at the language that individuals use to describe girls, and the idea of gender. This activity will be repeated, to some extent, in one or two subsequent lessons as girls struggle with the idea of a feminine identity, and who determines what it means to be female. In this case, girls will examine language and most importantly, reject the usage of negative language attributed to females. This method, when repeated over several weeks, should highlight the dangers of actively or passively using disparaging language toward other females. The idea here is to paint a larger picture of a universal battle for identity and recognition among females that begins with rejecting negative language.

At the conclusion of this lesson, girls are asked to fill out a brief, anonymous exit survey about their participation and experience in group thus far. This survey serves a dual role in aiding the researcher in receiving feedback about the first three lessons of the curriculum *and* allowing the facilitator to receive group feedback as well. The design for this survey was inspired by the goals associated with the creation of the group: to provide engaging, insightful, useful information to empower a group of young women. Through these questions, girls will indicate their feelings about the information and manner of instruction as well as issue an ultimatum as to whether or not they would encourage others to join this group. While this survey is not meant to promote any type of personal growth among group members, it serves a useful position for the researcher and the facilitator.

### **Session 3: Findings and analysis:**

Met with some brief animosity during the commencement of the previous session, I was determined to sound more excited and engaged with this material at hand. This time, after confirming my addition of a session on psychological disorders, I moved quickly into the lesson plans,

to portray an air of excitement. When I finished reading the poem for the first time, the overwhelming response was “wow” and other expressions of amazement. Little did the girls know that they would get a chance to read it out loud. As we took turns reading, each girl spoke with courage and conviction, even if she stumbled over some of the words in English. I was impressed with the way that every girl chose to participate, and seemed to enjoy her chance to shine. Given that the girls are sometimes shy or hesitant to participate, this was an exhilarating change. The capstone of this experience however, was when it was my turn to read the last part over. The number of girls in the room worked evenly into the poem (there were 13 girls at this session!) and left me the opportunity to read the last lines over. As I got to the end of the poem, without any premeditation, the girls joined in for a chorus of “mine, mine, mine!” It was at this moment I knew that the goal of the poem had indeed been accomplished, even without explicit discussion.

The discussion that followed this poem was lively and enthusiastic, with each girl contributing through her own personal motivation. One of the most striking points of this discussion arose when I begged the question about sharing this poem with another person, more specifically, with a male. One student spoke up to answer this question and replied that a male would likely ask who wrote the poem. She furthered that she would reply that “Even Ensler wrote it.” Her perceived reply to this statement was then “is Even Ensler white?!” At this point I stopped the lesson, because I felt I had to interject. The young lady’s assertion that the woman was white was firstly unfounded and secondly not the reason I chose this poem. I talked to the girls about the idea of identity and the power behind being feminine rather than being white. I spoke about my personal conflicts with these issues, given my leadership of this group, as a peer because I am female and how I do not associate my desire to create this group with my race. The girls seemed to understand my point, because when I asked her about it again, the young lady told me she would reply “I’m not sure if she’s white, but she’s a woman!”

The growth and progression that occurred during this session on “My Short Skirt” cemented my reasons for creating the curriculum, and strengthened my convictions to these girls. I realized that through perspective, knowledge and understanding (mixed with a little creativity) they could truly grow to see themselves and the world in a different light. These feelings were validated through

the next activity where the girls were asked to experiment with, or write their own poems. I have reproduced poems with the girls' permissions:

*"My Body Is Mine"*

The fact that I look ugly or look hot has nothing to do with you

Stop judging me 'cause I was born like this

The way that I look is none of your business

I am hot and I KNOW IT; Stop reminding me of how I look

I am the reminder of who I am

Believe me or not, I am proud of what I am

Stop looking at me and live your life the way you want to

This body is mine and really mine

*"My Short Skirt Version 2.0"*

My body is my temple

My right of passage

It represents me

The scars and marks on it are like tiny memories of my childhood

My short skirt does not measure the level of my intelligence

It doesn't define my future

It doesn't mean I'm cheap

Or that I'm not available

My body and my short skirt doesn't give you the write to



Look

Say

Or do

Anything to me

My body belongs to me and me only

*“My Body”*

My Body is a symbol of what I represent

It’s my humble home which I and I ALONE detect

What goes and what stays

No one has the right to judge my choices

The decisions I make define MY path

Terms and conditions, yes, do apply for this baby,

Call me a fool, that’s you too,

I’m a lioness with humble fur

Rest in my nest, I’ll bite

Don’t be fooled, these claws scratch, this heart hates.

These poems are pieces of original work, designed by the girls to reflect their feelings after listening to and reading “My Short Skirt.” The tone of each reflective poem mirrors the strong, powerful tone in the original poem, illustrating the girls’ connection with the original material. Additionally, the speaker of each poem seems to address the same audience, enumerating in each

case, rights that the young lady deserves. The second part of the poem activity clearly indicates the ways in which reading and discussing material engender a greater sense of empowerment. Most of the girls decided to share their poems out loud with other girls in the group, and as each girl finished, the room erupted with choruses of support. The conclusion of this activity epitomized the sense of comradeship, sisterhood and the sense of support I hoped to develop in implementing this curriculum. The girls' explicit support for one another in their affirmations of independence and ownership signaled a progression from the first group of reserved young ladies.

Since time again had elapsed more quickly than I originally planned, I opted to favor the bracelet making activity over the gender and language activity. My rationalization for this decision stems from my desire to literally remind the girls of the group through the creation of these bracelets. As I noted earlier, the curriculum contains activities similar to the *"Contract Among Allies"* and these bracelets represent a unique, creative outlet for representation of solidarity and commitment to the principles discussed in group. As I explained the activity, the girls were pleased about the idea of making bracelets, and understood the importance and significance of their presence. The material most readily available to me was string and therefore, each color the girls used represented a different part of her body she was proud of, or a commitment to keep *"my body is mine"* alive. I chose to let the girls use as many strings as they felt the need to express themselves, and bracelets ranged from three to twelve strands. Some girls explained publicly and others more in private about the meanings behind their bracelets. One universal idea resonated through each girl's explanation: I am in control of my body.

The conclusion of this lesson was the exit survey which was anonymously solicited. Each girl was asked to respond with the most forthcoming honesty in order to improve the curriculum and succeeding meetings of girls' group. The results are depicted below:

1. I feel that I have learned a lot in girls group:

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (yes)

**100% responding “10”**

Comments: **“Especially about sisterhood and woman’s empowerment”**

2. I feel that the group leader has done a good job:

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (yes)

**100% responding “10”**

Comments: **“She’s super nice and cool”**

3. I like the topics that we have discussed so far:

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (yes)

**67% responding “10,” 22% responding “9,” 11% responding “8”**

Comments:

4. I would tell a friend to join girls’ group:

Yes

No

**89% responding yes, 11% responding no (see comments)**

Comments: **“No, because they will finish our biscuits,”<sup>4</sup> “Yes, because I enjoy and I know that my friend too would like to join”**

The girls’ answers to my questions were overwhelmingly positive and justified my extensions to the curriculum. While the girls who responded less than ten to the question about lesson topics neglected to comment, my inference was that they were less enthusiastic about the lesson on HIV/AIDS. To this end, I decided not to manipulate these parts of the curriculum due to the fact that the overwhelming response was positive, and no specifics critiques were listed.

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<sup>4</sup> Researcher’s note: I brought biscuits to each of the group meetings because every girls’ group I have attended or facilitated in the past enjoyed some type of snack.

## Session 4: Gender-Based Violence

### Week 4: Gender-based Violence

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**Abstract:** This lesson will act as a follow-up to the last lesson “My Body is Mine,” to discuss the frequency and incidence of gender-based violence in South Africa. Girls will engage with the statistics of violence and discuss their rights, specifically in relation to the police and violence. Girls will then make collages and write letters to the victims or perpetrators of violence, engaging with an imaginary (or real) person. The lesson will conclude with girls working to draft a letter to the municipal governor, and the provincial representatives asking for more strict prosecution of gender-based violence perpetrators and witnesses.

**Goals:** The goals of this lesson are for girls to honestly and openly discuss gender-based violence as it impacts the nation and also their community. Girls will engage with the topic on a personal level and develop a conviction to “if you see something, say something.”

#### Lesson:

##### 1. Facts and Figures

This portion of the week’s lesson can be very dry. It might help if you provide some kind of visual representation to engage the girls. It is very important that they hear these numbers to alert them to the scope of the problem. The significance of this part of the session lies in letting the girls know, especially if they have suffered or witness abuse, that they are not alone. The way that you present these numbers therefore should suggest first and foremost that abuse is a social problem, not an individual’s fault. The girls should be encouraged to discuss what perpetuates this problem and what contributes to it. From last week’s poem, they should be reminded that it is not the girls’ fault for the way she dresses or what she wears. Dispel any notions of “she’s asking for it.”

- Gender-based violence in South Africa is the highest in the world among countries not at war (Moffett 2002).
- In 2009, numbers indicated that 1/3 women in South Africa has been raped (Bouwer 2010).
- In the same year, an average of ¼ men in South Africa admitted to committing rape (Bouwer 2010).
- The numbers of women who have experienced sexual assault has increased since the beginning of South African democracy.

- When Jacob Zuma was charged with rape in 2006, he was acquitted because his victim was judged as mentally unstable because she suffered a previous rape.
- 60.4% of those in rural areas, 58.9% of those in urban areas and 63% of those in metropolitan areas report that they and their attacker were not alone during the incident (Bassadien and Hochfeld 2005).

Questions for digesting these statistics:

- *Does the comparison between South African and a war-torn nation suggest a social state of war against women in South Africa?*
- *Why do you think the number of females raped has gone up since the end of apartheid?*
- *Why do you think so many people witness gender-based violence and do nothing to stop it, or report it?*
- *What does the Zuma rape case say about the condition of women who have suffered rape?*
- *Does the state do enough to protect women?*
- *What can individual women do to protect women?*

One way to organize a discussion is to print these questions out and hand them to groups of two or three girls to present their answers to the group. This method is especially effective when there are shy group members.

## 2. "Dear Somebody" Collages

*Materials: for this activity you will need magazines or other forms of print media, glue and paper.*

This activity is set up to have girls engage in a non-verbal dialogue with aggressors. The girls should be given a number of magazines or other print media, scissors, glue and a piece of white paper. The girls should then make some kind of collage to speak with aggressors from the point of view of a friend, victim, witness or themselves. As the facilitator, you should participate with them, but you also should have completed one beforehand, as an example for the girls.

This activity should really challenge the girls to think about what they want to say to aggressors who continue to marginalize them, their friends or their gender. As the facilitator, you should try and steer conversations during the construction of collages, to discussion on gender-based violence. Here are a few good talking points that speak to the unity of art and emotion:

- *What colors are you using in your collage? Is there any importance to these colors?*
- *Have you decided to use any words in your collage? Why/ Why not?*

- What point of view are you using in your collage? Why did you choose to focus things this way?

Once all girls have finished their collages, have them present them to the group and explain what motivated their creation. They can say as little or as much as they want because the real message is in their artwork.

### 3. Letters of Solidarity/ to the Perpetrator

*Materials: for this activity each girl will need a piece of paper and a pen.*

After the girls make their collages, or if some have finished, have them move on to this step. In this step, girls are asked to verbally confront a perpetrator or victim about abuse. They should write a short poem or letter to either a victim or aggressor discussing some of their emotions surrounding abuse. These letters can be a description of their artwork as well. Girls should know they do not have to share this letter with the group if they do not want, but the purpose is to make them practice engaging in dialogue with another about abuse.

Once the girls have finished their letters, you should let them know that the object of the activity was for them to practice speaking with those involved in abuse, to increase the conversations about abuse. Ask them if they ever discuss abuse, or if it is generally considered a taboo topic. Push them to discuss why the topic is taboo, if that is their conclusion. If they think abuse is discussed on a regular basis, ask them about the context under which it is discussed and what they think this does to further prevent abuse or make it worse.

### 4. Rights of Women/ if You See Something, Say Something

At this point you should discuss the rights of women, specifically when it comes to gender-based violence and the police. Here are the specific rights you should make sure your girls know (adapted from *Destiny Magazine's "Crime Capital"* April 2010):

- When women are stopped by a police officer, they have the right to refuse any kind of action that is not standard arrest procedure. Women are never required to pay or have sex with police officers.
- If women are being pursued, they are permitted to safely run a red light in self defense.
- All police must present an SAPS ID card (and you may ask to see it, if not). The police must then explain why they are making an arrest.
- Once a woman is arrested, she has the right to a lawyer, and to be placed in a women's only cell.
- With respect to sexual abuse, there are no laws that protect women specifically, they are simply considered equal to men.

→ Women can apply for a protection order through the South African Police department (provide girls with a copy of the Domestic Violence Act of 1998 for specifics).

→ Women have all the rights that men do, and have the right to stand up to discrimination in the workplace or anywhere in a court of law.

Following your discussion of rights, you should talk about making a pact between the girls called “if you see something, say something.” For the girls, explain that this serves to promote less violence against all women, not even the ones specifically involved. If men know they will actually get in trouble for assaulting women, perhaps they will be less likely to commit a violent act. If it helps, have the girls sign a contract that says they will report any violence they see or hear about. Give them these phone numbers to help them out.

### **Stop Women Abuse Helpline**

0800-150-150

### **Advice Desk for Abused Women**

Tel: 031 262 5231

24 Hour Hotline: 031 262 9673/9

Email: deskforabused@telkomsa.net

Postal Address: PO Box 65227, Reservoir Hills, 4090

Physical Address: UKZN, Westville Campus, Asoka Theatre, K Block, Room 120, Durban, 3610

### **Open Door Crisis Centre**

Tel: 031 709 2679

24 Hour Hotline: 013 709 6688

Postal Address: PO Box 1605, Pinetown, 3610

Physical Address: 7 Windsor Road, Pinetown, 3610

Work In: Shelter

Working Hours: Mon - Sun, 24 hours

### **Sahara Shelter for Abused Women and Children**

Tel: 031 500 3671

24 Hour Hotline: 031 508 2300 (Phoenix SAP)

Email: [childw@iafrica.com](mailto:childw@iafrica.com)

Postal Address: c/o Phoenix Child and Family Welfare, PO Box 309, Mount Edgecombe 4300

Physical Address: 10 Featherstone Place, Whetstone, Phoenix, 3610

1. Letter to “Whom it May Concern”

This activity requires that the girls draft a letter to the municipal director and members of parliament asking for more action against gender-based violence. The girls should start the letter by highlighting the increase in sexual violence against women since the end of apartheid. Girls should appeal to members of parliament to invest more in combating gender-based violence, claiming their rights to be protected as equals. You will agree to send the letters to the MPs and the municipal director. Here are useful addresses:

**Address for MPs:**

Box 15

Cape Town

8000

**Address for city councilor:**

Ngubane Susimpi Simon

[NgubaneSS@durban.gov.za](mailto:NgubaneSS@durban.gov.za)

**To the Municipality:**

P O Box 1014

Durban

4000.



## **Conclusion:**

The end of this lesson simply involves once again soliciting anonymous questions and letting the girls share any closing remarks on the day. Girls should recognize the effect that speaking openly about abuse can have in helping their friends and their communities.

## **Session 4: Curriculum rationalization:**

This lesson is a continuation of the previous week's work on self-control and self ownership as a method of fighting gender-based violence. Gender-based violence in South Africa is a major cause for concern among women, given that they are the primary targets. Startling figures display that one of every three South African women has been raped, and that one in every four men admits to rape in the last year (Bouwer 2010). These figures support my creation of a two-part lesson aimed at confronting and combating gender-based violence. The first section's focus on control aims to enable girls to act and think independently, and to recognize that they are entitled never to be victims of any kind of abuse. The second part of this curriculum, the part that specifically confronts gender-based violence, strives to familiarize girls with the language and facts and figures of gender-based violence, as well as connect them with resources and outlets for help. From the combination of these two lessons, girls should feel confident in helping themselves and their friends avoid such abuse.

The first section of the curriculum, while seemingly dry, sets the stage for further discussion and engagement with the topic. Girls deserve to know the facts about gender-based violence and because of the severity of the issue, these facts should not be concealed through a game or otherwise multi-focused activity. The format instead looks to present girls with the facts, and then use them to fuel a provocative discussion about gender-based violence. Girls are asked to look at both the social and political systems that help to perpetuate gender-based violence to draw their own conclusions. The discussion questions are organized to guide the discussion to first locate the problem internationally, and situate South African within world politics. The importance of this portion of the lesson is to ignite girls to think about the possible existence of a social war, without weapons or arms. Girls should then examine the increasing prevalence of gender-based violence as a problem inconsistent with the goals of democracy. Questions then address the issues of social

stigmas related to gender-based violence, and conclude with a focus on individual women. This designed progression seeks to motivate discussion from a hypothetical problem to a reality.

The second activity is designed to combine creativity and voice to speak to the actors involved in gender-based violence. Although this activity broaches on a touchy subject, the object of the activity is not to confront individuals, but society at large. The motivation behind this section is that between the number of individuals who witness gender-based violence, and the number of females who experience it, gender-based violence has likely impacted each one of these young girls' lives in some way. Because these issues are often very difficult and sensitive to discuss, art provides an excellent outlet for communication without the necessity of intimate verbal dialogue. The questions that follow this activity are meant not to question the story behind the collage, but the artistic license each girl evoked in its creation. In this way, girls are free to share as much or as little as they feel comfortable sharing and the facilitator should not feel compelled to extract stories from the girls.

The activity of letter writing that follows the creation of artwork allows girls another opportunity to announce their feelings about gender-based violence. The range of options in this activity is specifically varied to encourage full participation from group members. This activity strives to allow girls to confront gender-based violence from yet another perspective and creates another emotional outlet. While the sharing of letters remains optional, the girls can revel in the fact that each one of them has, in some way, confronted gender-based violence as an individual. These two activities, when viewed in conjunction, provide girls with an opportunity to take an independent stance against the proliferation of such a crime by themselves creating a dialogue against it.

The next activity *"If you see something, say something"* was designed to combat the number of witnessed cases of gender-based violence. In addition, this session aims to help girls identify some of their specific rights with respect to police officers and the criminal justice system. The rationalization for the police-based model was sparked by an article in *Destiny* magazine that identified over 400 police aggressors over a sixteen month period (Bouwer 2010). Additionally, my own personal experiences with harassment from SAPS fueled the inclusion of these specific facts. The goals of this section are quite clear, and its rationalization is supported by the high numbers of witnessed cases of gender-based violence.

The final activity in this session asks the girls to write letters to their municipal government and to parliament stressing that more action is needed to protect the sanctity and rights of women. In the new age of gender equality, women should not be forced to suffer such abuses and especially to such a disproportional degree. The object of these letters is to empower girls to view themselves as participants in a political society, and to influence the opinions of South Africa's leaders. The girls foundation for discussion hinges on the anti-democratic nature of this violence, and its connections with the legacy of apartheid. A clear distinction lies in the government's explicit affirmation of race separation during apartheid, and the government's tacit affirmation of gendered violence through non-activity. This distinction is marked in law and policy only however, because in each case, a majority of the citizens found themselves systematically oppressed by citizens of the same nation.

#### **Session 4: Findings and Analysis:**

This week's lesson was my final meeting with the girls and thus met with bittersweet emotions. In some respects, I am excited about the idea of turning the group over to the girls and allowing them to run it by themselves but in others, I wish I could stay and work with them and continue to adapt the curriculum to fit their specific needs. When I arrived at the Wiggins library I found that the seminar room that we reserved and typically used was already taken. I walked downstairs to double check that I had a booking for this time, which indeed I had, and was instructed to wait for a few minutes for the other group to finish up. Typically a few minute delay would not have bothered me however, this was my last meeting with the girls, and I wanted to get through a lot.

The group meeting commenced ten minutes later than usual, and so I launched into a discussion of facts surrounding gender-based violence almost immediately. I resolved that a more effective way to reveal these facts and promote active and involved discussion was one at a time rather than all at once. This way, the group's focus would all be the same, and each fact was allotted some time for digestion and processing. Many of the numbers startled the girls, but they were not so shocked by the realities. They appeared aware that the scope of those affected by gender-based violence is enormous, but were still startled by the actual numbers. One of the questions I asked regarded the increase in incidents since the end of apartheid and what contributed to this increase. The girls' answer surprised me because it did not come up my research however, I find it distinctly

plausible. As a contributor to the increase of cases since the end of apartheid, girls suggested an increase in reporting. During apartheid, they claimed “no one would have cared” and therefore, more women have come forward, whether or not the actual incidence has increased. I am inclined to accept this response as one of the contributing factors however; I will not go so far as to attribute all of the increase to increased reporting.

When I brought up the number of cases of witnessed abuse, this ignited a discussion on family values, and whether or not girls’ stories would be credited as true. One girl explained that if she accused her married uncle of abusing her, no one would listen or believe her because he is older and married. She shared about a friend who was molested by a family member as a child, and how that friend never told her parents for fear of some of the social stigmatism of becoming a victim. As this discussion delved deeper into a confrontation of social attitudes and opinions surrounding abuse, Malusi called me outside of the classroom. I excused myself and went to join him, where he wanted to introduce me to a man who ran a youth empowerment program that centered on the ideas of peer-facilitation. While I appreciated the nice things he had to say about my work, I really wanted to get back to the girls and the discussion. After a few short minutes with these men, I excused myself, admitting that I had to finish up with the girls.

The last point we discussed with respect to the facts of gender-based violence was the Zuma rape case and its outcome. Girls were admittedly frustrated at what this case did to tacitly condone other acts of rape and gender-based violence through the legal system. We discussed the impact on the female gender as a whole of Zuma’s acquittal, and one girl admitted that she believes the victim was paid off not to testify strongly against Zuma. The girls articulated disappointment in the acquittal and were frustrated with what this represented on a national level, about the vulnerable position of women. I encouraged them to think about how the role an individual plays in shaping the perceptions of woman, and empowered them to stand up against any and all cases of gender-based violence they witness, incur or hear about. The significance of each individual’s actions, I explained was to let at least one aggressor know that what he did was wrong. In the case of non-confrontation or reporting, girls were tacitly approving men’s actions and men learned that they would not get in trouble for abuse. Girls understood the circular nature of this rationality, and agreed to stand up against any and all cases of abuse.

Time was getting short after this discussion and I realized we only could complete one more activity. I chose the collages in order to show girls a new and different way to express their emotions. The idea was confusing to the girls at first, but once they got the hang of it, the collages were fully expressive and informative. Some of the phrases and images have been reproduced below:

Image: a check, cut out from a magazine coupled with the phrase “how much will it take to stop?”

Image: a diary with a chain around it coupled with the phrase “you have my freedom in chains.”

Image: a man and woman getting married coupled with the phrase “I want to trust you again.”

Image: a pale, thin looking beat up woman sitting on a dumpster coupled with the phrase “stop what you are doing to me”

Image: two girls sitting together in a sauna coupled with the phrase “we don’t trust mankind now”

Image: a girl visibly aggravated and tired with the phrase “stress about speaking out and thinking.”

Image: the words “We Hear You!” from a magazine with the phrase “so please speak out” written under it.

Image: the question “just what are those dark spots” cut out from a magazine placed over a picture of a life preserve and coupled with the written phrase “save your life if you speak out”

Image: the phrase from a magazine, centered on the page “If you can’t stand making little transitions, you may end up making big ones you don’t like.”

I was very proud of all these images and phrases the girls combine to speak out about gender-based violence. Many girls took to the idea of a voice, and literally speaking up against the violence. From our earlier discussion they appeared to understand the power of admitting abuse happened, and harnessed the energy to tell abusers that they were robbing girls of essential freedoms. As this lesson concluded, girls were proud of their images, and spoke freely about the motivations for their creation. Girls asserted that these images were powerful in that they constituted a different kind of dialogue about abuse. As the lesson came to a close, I thanked the girls for their participation, and gave the entire curriculum to one girl, Zama, who agreed to keep meeting with the girls and discussing women’s issues. I could not have been more proud or pleased with the events of the

previous four weeks, and how I watched the girls grow and confront these important women's issues as a group.

### **Session 5: Women's Sexuality and Development**

**Abstract:** This lesson will explore the different aspects of sexuality with special respect to gender. We will discuss some of the different sexual preferences and the idea of heteronormativity. We will do activities to test girls understanding of gender through situations of anonymous, hypothetical peers. We will discuss the idea of a Kinsey scale of sexual preference and the constraints society put on gender. We will then discuss female development with respect to each other and also to males.

**Session 5: Rationalization:** I created this lesson based upon a request from one of the group members to discuss female sexuality. She mentioned the topic to me at the KZN YEP youth group meeting where I first solicited members for girls' group and reminded me again after the first girls' group lesson. These issues are paramount to girls understanding of development, identity and preference and therefore merit inclusion in this curriculum.

### **Session 6: Psychological Diseases**

**Abstract:** This week, girls will discuss psychological diseases such as anorexia, bulimia and depression. They will engage with these ideas through open and honest discussion to discover what the diseases are and how individuals can help friends. Girls will engage in activities that help illustrate the dangers of these illnesses and how they become compulsive. Girls will make "Am I pretty yet?" artwork or poems to discuss how they feel about body image. Girls will attempt to understand depression and self mutilation through engaging in dialogue about the topic.

**Session 6: Rationalization:** This lesson was created in response to two girls' requests following the second girls' group meeting. I never intended to address this issue, but seeing as it was on the minds of more than one student, I figured it merited discussion. Upon further research, I discovered that not only are bulimia and anorexia gendered issues, but that depression affects teenage girls more often than teenage boys. This lesson, with much help from medical websites, has substantially enriched this curriculum.

## **Session 7: Teenage Pregnancy**

**Abstract:** This week we will discuss the clearly gendered problem of teenage pregnancy. We will discuss contraception and options for pregnant girls. We will practice using condoms as contraceptives and have open and frank discussion about stigmatism surrounding pregnancy. We will look at life before and after pregnancy through role-playing and list making. We will then write a form letter to school districts alerting them of the “social” rather than “individual” location of this problem, asking them to cease pregnancy discrimination.

**Session 7: Rationalization:** I first became interested with the topic of teenage pregnancy as an area of female suppression when I was informed that in some schools, young pregnant girls are not permitted to wear the school uniform, for fear that they will tarnish the school’s reputation. Upon further research I discovered that not only was this somewhat common practice, but that it is illegal. This lesson was created to respond both to community stigmatism and the relatively high incidence of teenage pregnancy in South Africa. In addition, support for this lesson was derived from interviews with group participants who highlighted teenage pregnancy as the most important issue facing young girls today.

## **Session 8: Girl Fighting**

**Abstract:** This week we will work to discuss the ways that girls bully other girls. We will talk about some of the insults and methods girls use to fight with each other. We will discuss the way that the media/ boys condone this kind of behavior, and what it does to further marginalize the female gender. We work through the issues behind girl fighting by role playing and freeze-framing scenarios.

**Session 8: Rationalization:** I created this lesson in response to comments in the anonymous question box after week one that suggested that girls should be nicer to other girls. I placed the lesson later in the curriculum to help girls identify the progress they made throughout the course of girls’ group. This lesson is meant to encourage girls to stop fighting against other girls and instead work together toward gender equality.

## **Session 9: In the Media**

**Abstract:** This week will challenge girls to look at the way that the media portrays women. They will look through magazine ads and newspaper ads to highlight the way that the media objectifies women. They will then make their own ads, from magazines, selling a product, not a person. The girls will look at Barbie as an example of overly sexualized women in the media. Girls will also look at products marketed to children that portray a certain image of women to young girls.

**Session 9: Rationalization:** I designed this lesson to look at a more global perspective of marginalized women. Many of the lessons have focused on the position of women and South Africa, and how girls can impact their individual and community lives. This lesson pushes girls to look outside of their communities at a more generic problem with the way women are sexualized to sell products.

## **Session 10: Happy, Healthy Relationships**

**Abstract:** In this week, girls will work to formulate group and independent ideas about what constitutes a healthy, happy relationship. Girls will talk about the roles and responsibilities as well as expectations of a relationship, to outline “Mr./Mrs. Right.” Girls will then talk about “no means no,” in order to emphasize that they still have rights in a relationship. We will talk about the expression “who wears the pants,” and discuss what is culturally normative vs. what they want. Girls will role-play discussing unhealthy relationships with a friend to highlight the way that girls should look out for one another.

**Session 10: Rationalization:** This lesson was created in response to discussions with KZN YEP leaders and volunteers. Each member reflected that relationships were one of the most prevalent and overwhelming issues that challenge young women today. I designed this lesson with their ideas in mind, but was careful to portray them through the lens of a feminist. Each male emphasized his point by discussing the relationship girls have with men, and the way that men see them, epitomizing a male-centric society. From their suggestions I inferred that much of the relationship advice these girls receive through the KZN YEP follows a male-centric agenda and thus, girls needed a space to discuss relationships among other girls.



## **Session 11: Identity, Life Goals and Group Support**

**Abstract:** In the second to last unit, girls will reflect on their time in girls' group, what they discussed, and how it is important to both them, and their peers. They will look at how their idea of identity has developed since the beginning of group, and what they can give to other girls. Girls will then look at drafting lists of life goals, and action plans for seeing these life goals put into motion. Girls will then discuss the importance of girl-on-girl support and commit to support each other/ other girls in the community through what they have learned.

**Session 11: Rationalization:** This is the second to last session of girls' group, and its goal is to work with girls to combine the information they have learned throughout the course of the group to activate change in their lifestyles and communities. I designed this lesson to help girls figure out goals and life plans, and act as a support network for one another. The purpose of girls' group is to be a sustainable part of the girls' lives, whether or not they attend weekly meetings after these twelve weeks.

## **Session 12: Allies in Action!**

**Abstract:** During the final week of girls group, girls will work together to form an action plan to give back to their community. Girls will work together to design some kind of community service to spread the message of "girl power" throughout their community/ school. They will discuss the way that they benefited from this group and will encourage other girls to participate in the group program when it starts again. Any strong leaders from throughout the lessons and weeks will be trained as facilitators to run groups in the future.

**Session 12: Rationalization:** Although girls' group is meant to benefit the girls who attend regular meetings, this lesson is meant to teach girls the power of outreach. In order to effectively ignite change, girls will need a support base of allies in their communities and nationally. The motivation behind this lesson is for girls to share some part of girls group with the community at large, and help to empower other women. In addition, this lesson speaks to the sustainable nature of group in identifying and training strong future group leaders to create their own girls' groups.

## ***Conclusions:***

The “rainbow nation” that marks the beginning of a new South Africa, a country fifteen years young, denotes a society where people of different races embrace their South African heritage and identify as part of a larger, more equal society. While liberal in its conception, said nation of unity between all races neglects to champion the rights of some of its most valuable citizens. Focused on moving past the racial segregations of apartheid, the new liberalized constitution promised equality to all and the dawning of a new era. What South Africa made up for in liberal legislative will, it lacked in implementation in the face of the protection of women’s freedoms. Since the chains of apartheid were lifted, women in South Africa have confronted and increase in violence, rape, HIV/AIDS, and teenage pregnancy among other things. These human rights violations are not to be taken lightly, as they represent the foundation of a new, anti-democratic society in which the victims are gendered not colored.

Feminist theory holds that the space for actualization and change in the arena of women’s rights is through civil society. Women have achieved symbolic positions of representation in parliament, with no noted improvements to their social positions with respect to many gendered issues. It is through this rationalization that I found the motivation for creation and study of a young women’s empowerment curriculum. The group covered issues from HIV/AIDS to self-control and ownership, to gender-based violence. Through discussion of issues with the girls, and interviews with other members of the KZN YEP, I have concluded that girls require an all-female, peer-facilitated outlet for gender empowerment in a male-centric world. Even as the goals of the YEP literally suggested open mindedness and a desire for such a group, the inertia behind its’ creation was developed from a patriarchal perspective.

Through my engagement with the girls and my curriculum, I observed gender empowerment in motion. The key to success in this field was combining information with creativity and dialogue in order to engender a sense of empowerment. Success was measured by the increased participation of individual members, and by the increase in the number of group members at each succeeding meeting. Exit surveys and interviews with girls demonstrated that the groups goals were being met through the varieties of mediums, and that girls valued the time they spent in group. Girls were

visibly more outspoken among one another and began to support group members in their participation in group. The goals of cohesion and sisterhood were so clearly met through discussion and support, creating a space for comradely and activism. Overwhelmingly the success of this group indicates that young girls participation in civil society must be activated and engaged in order to empower young women to take charge and change their social and political position.

This study, however complete, thrives upon constant manipulation and adaptation to the needs of a specific group. Its strength is in its sustainability however, without the correct motivation, all is lost. One of the keys to the success of this study is that it is constantly under review and changed to fit the needs of a specific group. For this, the study requires a motivated individual who is excited and enthusiastic about empowering young women. The individual must be open to working with the given material and improving upon it to make it truly effective. In addition, this curriculum can be implemented in many different schools, as long as facilitators are trained to do so. This will ensure the sustainability of such efforts.

In addition to ensuring the sustainability of this curriculum, girls' group sessions could be improved upon by incorporating experts in the field into some of the more technical sessions. Information on psychological diseases, for instance, has the potential to have a great impact among communities however; it might be better confronted through a lesson with a professional in the field. In addition, activities are fairly simple creative and craft-based in nature. Perhaps a play or a story would better engage girls with the material.

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## **Appendix A:**

### Week 5: Women's Sexuality/Development

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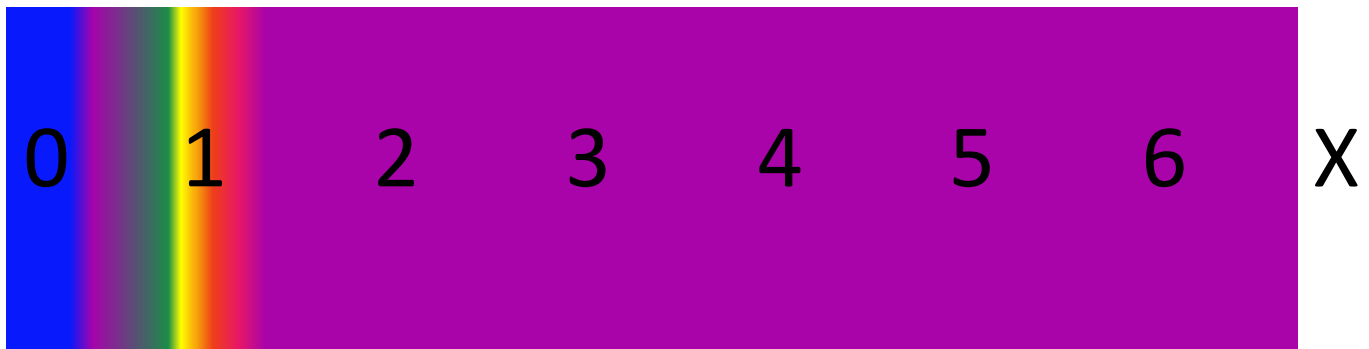
**Abstract:** This lesson will explore the different aspects of sexuality with special respect to gender. We will discuss some of the different sexual preferences and the idea of heteronormativity. We will do activities to test girls understanding of gender through situations of anonymous, hypothetical peers. We will discuss the idea of a Kinsey scale of sexual preference and the constraints society put on gender. We will then discuss female development with respect to each other and also to males.

**Goals:** the goal of this lesson is for girls to engage in discussion about sexuality and development. Girls will talk about the construct of gender and sexuality in their culture and with respect to the rest of the world. Girls will also learn more about their own development and begin to understand the young women's aging process.

#### **Lesson:**

##### 1. Sexuality and the Kinsey Scale:

This activity will expose the girls to a discussion of the levels of sexuality. They will confront perspectives that suggest that sexuality is not a polar construction and instead describes a range of sexual preference. This activity begins with the facilitator presenting this model of the Kinsey Scale to the girls.



The Facilitator should explain the range of numbers on the scale, starting with 0 and moving on to "X."

0: This person is exclusively heterosexual. They only are sexually attracted to people of the opposite biological and social gender.

1: This person is usually heterosexual, but every once and awhile favors their own gender.

2: This person is primarily heterosexual but favors their own gender from time to time.

3: This person is bisexual and is equally attracted to both those of their gender and those of the opposite gender.

4: This person is mostly bisexual with a slight tendency to favor their own gender.

5: This person is mostly bisexual but favors their own gender more often than the opposite gender.

6: This person is exclusively homosexual and only favors the opposite gender.

X: This person is asexual and has no level of sexual preference because he or she is not a sexual being.

This gender preference is represented visually by the fade from a solid color to rainbow colors, indicating a greater homosexual tendency. The facilitator should then ask a few discussion questions to motivate positive, open discussion on the subject:

- *What do you think about this range of sexualities? Do you believe it exists?*
- *Do you think it is confining for people who identify as a 1,2,4 or 5 to have to identify as either exclusively homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual?*
- *Do you think it is okay for both boys and girls to fall outside of any of the specific 0,3,6 categories?*

## 2. The Heterosexual Questionnaire:

This exercise is meant to make girls think about the way that society treats people who are not exclusively heterosexual. For people who have a sexual preference that lies outside of exclusive heterosexuality, they are often forced, by society, to explain more about their identity than someone who is perceived as “normal.” This exercise is meant to challenge that. You need not ask all the questions; just ask enough so that the girls get a good idea of what the questionnaire is about. Do not ask them to answer the questions, they are purely hypothetical, however, make sure as you read to leave enough time between the questions for girls to fully appreciate the motivation behind each.

## HETEROSEXUAL QUESTIONNAIRE

(©1972, Martin Rochlin, Ph.D. )

This questionnaire is for self-avowed heterosexuals only. If you are not openly heterosexual, pass it on to a friend who is. Please try to answer the questions as candidly as possible. Your responses will be held in strict confidence and your anonymity fully protected.

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
2. When and how did you first decide you were a heterosexual?
3. Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?
4. Could it be that your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?
5. If you've never slept with a person of the same sex, how can you be sure you wouldn't prefer that?
6. To whom have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?
7. Why do heterosexuals feel compelled to seduce others into their lifestyle?
8. Why do you insist on flaunting your heterosexuality? Can't you just be what you are and keep it quiet?
9. Would you want your children to be heterosexual, knowing the problems they'd face?
10. A disproportionate majority of child molesters are heterosexual men. Do you consider it safe to expose children to heterosexual male teachers, pediatricians, priests, or scoutmasters?
11. With all the societal support for marriage, the divorce rate is spiraling. Why are there so few stable relationships among heterosexuals?
12. Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?
13. Considering the menace of overpopulation, how could the human race survive if everyone were heterosexual?
14. Could you trust a heterosexual therapist to be objective? Don't you fear s/he might be inclined to influence you in the direction of her/his own leanings?
15. Heterosexuals are notorious for assigning themselves and one another rigid, stereotyped sex roles. Why must you cling to such unhealthy role-playing?
16. With the sexually segregated living conditions of military life, isn't heterosexuality incompatible with military service?



17. How can you enjoy an emotionally fulfilling experience with a person of the other sex when there are such vast differences between you? How can a man know what pleases a woman sexually or vice-versa?
18. Shouldn't you ask your far-out straight cohorts, like skinheads and born-again, to keep quiet? Wouldn't that improve your image?
19. Why are heterosexuals so promiscuous?
20. Why do you attribute heterosexuality to so many famous lesbian and gay people? Is it to justify your own heterosexuality?
21. How can you hope to actualize your God-given homosexual potential if you limit yourself to exclusive, compulsive heterosexuality?
22. There seem to be very few happy heterosexuals. Techniques have been developed that might enable you to change if you really want to. After all, you never deliberately chose to be a heterosexual, did you? Have you considered aversion therapy or Heterosexuals Anonymous?

Once you have asked as many, or as few questions as you deem necessary to accurately convey the message of this exercise, discuss these questions with the girls:

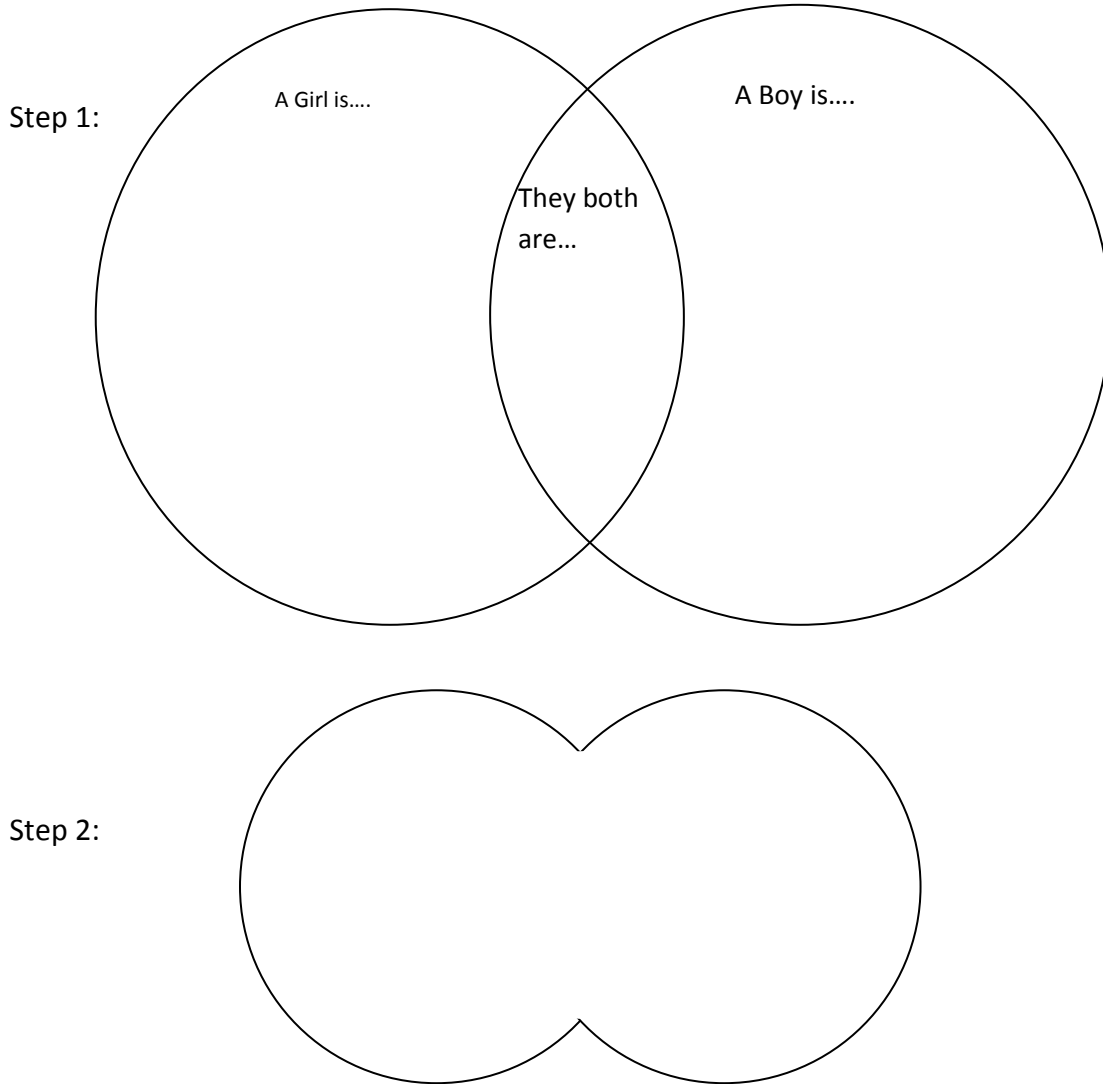
- *Have you ever thought about these kinds of questions before?*
- *How does it feel to have someone question part of your identity that you might find hard to explain?*
- *How did hearing these questions make you feel?*
- *Why do you think we question people about their sexual preferences so frequently?*

Make sure to give the girls time to discuss this activity as much as they would like to. It might be their first exposure to the idea of sexuality linked with identity instead of choice. You should make sure to highlight this point, but not argue against girls who still believe otherwise. Remember to remind girls to argue against ideas, not people.

### 3. The Man Box and the Woman Box:

This activity is meant to make girls think about the construct and confines of gender. It will challenge them to look at what defines "male" and "female" in their society, and whether or not it is okay for people to be otherwise. This activity begins with a pencil and two pieces of paper (or one front and back). Draw a box on each sheet of paper (or use the ones provided at the end of this lesson). On the top of one sheet, write "girl" and on the top of the other write "boy." Then ask the girls to add words to each box that describes a girl or boy, and put words outside the box that do not describe a girl or boy. Once they have finished coming up with the "man box," and the "women box," you

should start to question them about the terms inside and outside the box. Ask them about the terms inside the box, if all girls are \_\_\_\_\_ and if all boys are \_\_\_\_\_. Ask them if they know any boys who are not \_\_\_\_\_ or girls who are not \_\_\_\_\_, of the terms inside the box. Of the terms outside the box, ask them if they, or anyone they know fit the girl terms outside the boys. Ask them if they know any boys who fit the boy terms outside the box. Once you have forced them to think about these terms, ask them if they would be comfortable erasing the lines of the boxes. You can also set this activity up like a Venn Diagram (pictured below) and erase the middle lines. Ask the girls if this activity makes them think any different about gender, and how it is constructed.



#### 4. Communicate without Gender:

This activity is a challenge for the girls to communicate in a genderless world. It is meant to display to them the significance that gender holds as a part of identity in our society. At the same time, it is meant to make them question how much gender should matter (because it is such a socially defined construct).

Ask the girls to have a conversation with one another about family members, friends, movie stars, etc. The girls are not allowed to speak the person's name, or gender, in the conversation. At the end of each story, the partner should guess the gender of the person described. Here are some examples you may read out loud to the girls as well (please note, these are all real people):

Person #1: This person loves to be outdoors. His/her favorite activity is hiking, and he/she enjoys taking gorgeous pictures of the scenery. His/her favorite color is purple, and he/she enjoys listening to music. He/ she wants to be a lawyer when he/she grows up, but for now he/she works hard in university. He/she likes to play football, rugby and go running. He/she loves to travel and has been to 5 out of 7 continents. What is this person's gender? Answers: female.

Person #2: This person loves to write and listen to poetry and play the guitar. He/ she loves to cook, and is often found singing while he/she is cooking. This person is a practicing lawyer and loves to run and read. This person enjoys vacationing in a mountain house on a lake. What is this person's gender? Answer: male

Person #3: This person is happily married, and has been for 2 years. This person loves cats and does not like dogs. This person is quite the cook in the kitchen and a professor at a local university. This person is an exquisite interior decorator and has authored and edited a number of books. This person enjoys taking long walks by the water and reading. This person is very politically active, and comes from a small farming town. What is this person's gender? Answer: Male

Person #4: This person grew up in the rural areas but moved to the city as soon as he/she started schooling. This person loves designer jeans and designer clothes. His/her favorite music is by Jay-Z and Beyonce, but he/she can also be found listening to Big Nuz. This person would prefer not to cook, but does on occasion. This person has a dog who he/she raised from a puppy. He/she works with learners, helping them with their daily life. He/she speaks fluent zulu. What is this person's gender? Answer: Male

Person #5: This person grew up in the city and has lived there his/her whole life. This person plans and coordinates all the major operations for an international company and communicates with political figures on a regular basis. This person is not married and is 34 years old. This person has lived in three different houses in his/her life. He/she does not like to cook and he/she enjoys Indian food. He/she loves the beach and attending outdoor parties. This person likes to shop for others. What is this person's gender? Answer: female.

Once the girls have finished with this activity, ask them a series of discussion questions to get to the root of the issues:

- *How did you do at guessing this person's gender?*
- *Do you think this activity was useful? Why/why not?*

- *How important do you think gender is?*
- *What do you think gender really means? What defines gender?*

#### 5. Girls' Development:

This portion of the lesson is meant for girls' groups who want more information about young-adult development and maturity. It is mostly information and can be distributed to girls or read to them and discussed depending on your/their level of comfort.

Taken from *WebMD.com*:

#### **Growth and Development, Ages 11 to 14 Years - Overview**

How do children grow and develop between ages 11 and 14?

The ages 11 through 14 years are often referred to as early adolescence. These years are an exciting time of many varied and rapid changes. Your child grows taller and stronger and also starts to feel and think in more mature ways. You may feel amazed as you watch your child begin to turn into an adult. But this can be a confusing time for both kids and parents. Both must get used to the new person the child is becoming.

From ages 11 through 14, a child develops in four main areas:

- **Physical development.** Adolescence is a time of change throughout the body. A growth spurt usually occurs near the time of puberty. Girls begin to develop breasts and start their periods. Boys grow facial hair. Both boys and girls grow pubic hair. Boys may lag behind girls in height during these years, but they usually end up taller.
- **Cognitive development.** This is how the brain develops the abilities to think, learn, reason, and remember. Kids this age typically focus on the present, but they are starting to understand that what they do now can have long-term effects. They are also beginning to see that issues are not just clear-cut and that information can be interpreted in different ways.
- **Emotional and social development.** As they start to move from childhood into adulthood, adolescents feel the urge to be more independent from their families. Often, friends replace parents as a source of advice. When at home, adolescents may prefer spending time alone to being part of the family. Still, family support is important to help them build a strong sense of self.
- **Sensory and motor development.** Kids this age may be a little awkward or clumsy. Their brains need time to adjust to longer limbs and bigger bodies. Getting regular moderate exercise can improve coordination and help your child build healthy habits.

#### **Physical development between the ages of 11 and 14**

Adolescence is a time of rapid growth in height and weight and of physical changes throughout the body. Most of these changes occur near the time of puberty, which in the United States usually begins for girls between the ages of 9 and 11, and for most boys between the ages of 9½ and 13.

Breast buds-slight elevation and enlargement of the nipple area-are one of the first signs of puberty in girls. Also, pubic hair usually starts growing around the same time. In boys, the first indication of puberty is that the testicles increase in size, followed by the growth of pubic hair and by penis lengthening.

Girls usually grow rapidly during early puberty. Then growth slows down with the first menstrual period, which most commonly happens sometime between ages 11 and 14. (It can happen as early as age 9 or up to age 15.) For boys, the height spurt occurs after other signs of puberty have developed. While boys lag behind girls in height in early adolescence, they generally end up being taller than girls. This happens because after growth starts, boys grow at a faster rate and for a longer period of time. Girls reach their approximate adult height around 16 years of age, and boys at about 18 years of age.<sup>[1](#)</sup>

There has been a long-term trend toward earlier puberty and larger growth related to better health and nutrition. Also, race seems to affect the timing of puberty. For example, girls who are black generally enter puberty earlier than girls who are white.

The surging hormones related to puberty often stimulate the sex drive in both males and females. It is normal for members of both sexes to masturbate in private. Hormones may also trigger episodes of difficult behavior, such as challenging parents and other authority figures.

Growth in body parts may occur out of sync with each other. For example, the nose, arms, and legs may grow faster than the rest of the body. Other physical development during puberty usually includes:

- Bone growth, accounting for nearly 25% of final adult height.
- An increase of about 15% in skull bone thickness. The forehead becomes more prominent and the jaw grows forward.
- Weight gain. The increase in weight during the growth spurt that happens with puberty typically accounts for about 40% of the final adult ideal body weight.
- Changes in body fat composition. Girls' body fat increases, while boys' decreases. Teens who are obese at the end of puberty are at increased risk for being obese during adulthood.
- An increase in the size of organs. The heart doubles in weight, and lung size increases.
- Growth of facial hair in boys. Hair growth usually starts on the upper lip, gradually reaches the cheeks, and then the chin area.

**Conclusion:** At the conclusion of this lesson, just like the previous lessons, solicit anonymous and public questions and ask girls if they have any comments they want to wrap up with before the next session. Stress the importance of open-mindedness and thank them for their participation. Encourage them to share any comments about the structure or the execution of the lesson with you.

## The Man Box



## Week 6: Psychological Diseases

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**Abstract:** In this week, girls will discuss psychological diseases such as anorexia, bulimia and depression. They will engage with these ideas through open and honest discussion to discover what they are and how they can help friends. Girls will engage in activities that help illustrate the dangers of these illnesses and how they become compulsive. Girls will make “Am I pretty yet?” artwork or poems to discuss how they feel about body image. Girls will attempt to understand depression and self mutilation through engaging in dialogue about the topic.

**Goals:** The goals for this lesson are for girls to engage in dialogue about psychological diseases that are gendered and perpetuated by society. Girls should leave this lesson understanding what anorexia, bulimia and depression are, and how they affect young girls. They should know how to help friends and help themselves.

### **Lesson:**

#### 1. The A’s and B’s of Eating Disorders:

This part of the discussion is meant to be informative about anorexia and bulimia. The girls should understand something about the nature of the disease and some of the consequences to the body of each disease. They should use the activity sheet to test their knowledge at the conclusion of this lesson. Make sure you reinforce listening through incentivizing correctly answering the worksheet.

*Anorexia:* Anorexia is an eating disorder that is most prevalent in females. It is characterized by an intense, compulsive fear of weight gain, and the desire to lose weight in a threatening or unhealthy way. This disease is quite dangerous as it often results in malnutrition which, if unattended for periods of time, can lead to death. The motivating factor in this disease is the idea of body image, and wanting to appear different. Symptoms of anorexia include: thinning of the hair, growth of small, thin hairs on parts of the body that are usually hairless, brittle nails, dry skin, shrunken breasts, missed monthly periods, constipation, low blood pressure, swollen hands and feet, not sensing pain normally, purplish skin on the arms and legs (from poor circulation), yellowish skin on the hands and feet, and feeling cold with a lower-than-normal body temperature<sup>5</sup>. It is crucial to remind the girls that exhibiting any or all of these symptoms does not always indicate that a person is anorexic, but nonetheless they are important to note.

Treatment of these disorders typically involves efforts by family and friends to help the individual move past their nervosa. If you have a friend who you think is anorexic, it can be hard, and painful to

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<sup>5</sup> All symptoms and facts about Anorexia and Bulimia were taken and adapted from *WebMD.com*



broach the subject with this person. People often seek professional help to move past the psychological state of these eating disorders however, if the possibility to do so does not exist, here are some ways you can help (and things you should know):

- It's not a battle over one meal, it's a mental state of being, so although it may seem to help to encourage a friend to eat one, big meal, this actually aggravates their nervosa later, through feelings of guilt.
- Talking to your friend and asking them to help you acknowledge the problem, may be your best option if professional help is not an option. Speak with your friend in private, let her know you are concerned, tell her you would like to help her/ support her in any way possible.
- Do NOT: lie to her. Telling her she is thin and looks good is okay if it is the honest truth. If it is not, do not lie to your friend because she will assume you are lying and this will serve hurt your credibility in the future.
- Tell your friend about some of the ailments that are associated with anorexia such as osteoporosis (frail bones, break easily), irregular heartbeat, malnutrition and other related mental health problems such as depression. Let her know that you want to help her avoid these problems and still look good.
- Try to convince your friend that anorexic weight loss is unhealthy, and if she appears underweight, help her calculate her BMI to let her know she is unhealthy. The formula for calculation is:  $BMI = \text{weight in kilograms} / \text{height in meters}^2$  (weight in kilograms divided by (height in meters squared)). A healthy BMI lies between 18.5 and 24.9, so this may help dispel the notion of being "fat." If her BMI sits above that range, try to help her correct her dieting plan in a healthier way. Encourage her not to pursue such a fast-paced plan with so many risky health complications. Instead, suggest a plan of eating full, complete low-calorie meals, and exercised for 30 minutes per day.

*Bulimia:* Bulimia is a disease characterized by bingeing and purging, or eating excessive amounts and then purging it from your body by throwing up. Bulimia, like anorexia, is most common in females, and is a compulsive, control-related disease. Bulimia among girls runs the risk of a number of health complications including: eroded esophagus (from stomach acids traveling up frequently), poor health of gums, teeth and mouth tissue (related to stomach fluids in mouth), osteoporosis (bone thinning), kidney damage, malnutrition or heart complications. Like anorexia, if untreated for periods of time, bulimia can even cause death. Symptoms and signs of bulimia include eating a large amount of food in a short period of time (usually in an out of control manor), misuse of laxatives or other diuretic pills (drugs that make your body purge itself), goes to the bathroom right after meals all the time, eats a

lot but does not gain any weight, and has teeth marks or calluses on the backs of her hands and her cheeks are often swollen (caused by making self vomit).

The treatment process for a friend with bulimia is the same as for a friend with anorexia. The best outlet is always professional help but if she refuses to comply or does not have the means to acquire such help, follow the plan for home intervention. In both cases, try to encourage other friends and family members to be supportive of the cause as well by expressing concern in a non-threatening, non-aggressive manor.

If girls have any questions at this point, address them to the best of your ability and if you cannot, agree to research the issue for your girls. Remind girls that under the public healthcare system friends should be entitled to mental health consultations, which includes eating disorders.

## 2. “Am I Pretty Yet?”

*Materials: Pictures of thin models from magazines or some other media form, or blank paper makers or crayons that will write on whatever material you have chosen.*

This activity aims to challenge conventional norms of beautiful body image, by confronting some of the realities behind slender, sleek frames. The girls should take some of what they learned from their lessons on anorexia and bulimia and apply it to real-life situations. Each girl will be handed a picture of a model, from a magazine or the internet, some other media, or have them draw their idea of a beautiful, thin woman. You should explain to the girls that many times, models have serious eating disorders and check themselves into clinics. Following this discussion, ask them to deface their original picture by drawing on some of the health complications associated with anorexia and bulimia.

- Hair where it should not be, bad teeth and gums, scars and marks on the backs of hands, broken bones, purple coloring in legs and arms, yellow coloring in hands and feet, etc.

Have them label the drawings “Am I Pretty Yet?” and ask them to discuss what conventional notions of beauty and body type do to hurt women all over the world. Ask them if they think their deformed, disfigured women are pretty now and explain to them that these women might look good today, but eventually the complications of these disorders will come to fruition.

## 3. Depression and Self Mutilation:

Depression<sup>6</sup> and self-mutilation are two other mental health issues that are causally related. *Depression* is characterized as a down mood and mentality for a sustained amount of time, often seemingly irreconcilable. Depression is often marked by a foul, sad, or grumpy mood for long periods of time, and may lead to self-mutilation or even suicide. Signs and symptoms of depression are rapid weight loss or gain, sleeping too much or too little, feeling worthless, lonely or helpless and that she

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<sup>6</sup> Once again, all medical information was interpreted from *WebMD.com*

does not take pleasure in the things she used to enjoy. While depression is less of a gendered disease than anorexia or bulimia, it is still worth discussing with the girls.

Treatment for depression is varied because depression can either be neurological, or triggered by an event such as a death in the family or a break up. For neurological depression, one of the best treatments outside of anti-depressant medications is intensive, regular counseling. For depression that is triggered, counseling is often a great remedy, but home treatment may also prove effective. If you suspect a friend is suffering from depression, the following steps may be useful:

- First and foremost, express concern about the person's well-being. Explain to that person the marked change you have seen in their behavior and give them plenty of opportunity to explain. This may be a tricky step however, because a depressed person may be in denial and will try very hard (sometimes convincingly so) to explain her way out of a situation.
- If you feel that the person is truly suffering from depression, ask her if there is anything you can do to help. Tell her you are there to support her and would like to do everything that you can. Suggest some of the home-based treatments for depression such as:
  - o A healthy, nutritional diet, regular exercise, avoiding alcohol and other mood-altering drugs, get plenty of sleep (but not too much) and, most importantly, positive thinking. This last point, you can help her with by helping to reorient her perspective on situations to reflect a more positive light.

*Self-mutilation:* Self-injury takes many forms but is most often characterized as any action to inflict injury or unwarranted pain, purposefully, on oneself. This definition is meant to exclude pain inflicted from athletic competition, etc. Cutting, burning, hitting, and bone breaking are some of the more common forms of self-mutilation, and can be surprisingly easy to cover up. Because adolescent females are the most vulnerable population with respect to this illness, it merits discussion in group. If you suspect that a friend is committing self-injury, seek help immediately. Tell an educator or administrator at school that your trust, or an elder in the community. You can try to help your friend through honest, frank discussion, much like the discussions for depression. Oftentimes, depression leads to self-mutilation and thus, treating self-mutilation follows the same steps as treating depression.

Once you have finished explaining all of this to the girls, or having an open discussion involving and engaging the material, ask them if they have any questions and follow the same procedure as you would with eating disorders.

#### 4. Helping Hands (Writing Love on Our Arms):

This activity is meant to boost girls' self-esteem and remind them about the universal nature of love. Tell the girls about the non-profit organization *To Write Love on Her Arms* and its fight against depression, self mutilation, and drug abuse through love. Tell the girls they can find this organization

online at <http://www.twloha.com>, or on facebook, to see other examples of spreading the love. The way that this campaign works is that people write the word “love” or some symbol of love on their forearms simply to remind one another that they are not alone. Have the girls trace their hands and forearms on a piece of paper and complete this exercise as well. Remind them that there will always be love, whether or not it is always apparent. Ask them to share stories, if they would like, about friends or loved ones battling with depression or share your own. Tell them that sometimes, to individuals, it might seem that love is gone from their life, or the world, but that it will always exist and this is meant to be a small reminder of that.

**Conclusion:**

Conclude this lesson by asking girls to share any questions/ comments/ concerns with you or with each other. As always, ask them if they want to put anything in the anonymous question/ suggestion box.

## Helping To Recognize the Signs Worksheet:

*Next to each story write either: anorexia, bulimia, depression or self-injury to help you recognize signs and symptoms:*

Your friend Ncobonga is looking pretty thin, and she seems grumpy and tired all the time. You ask her what is wrong and she dismisses you by telling you that she is PMSing.	Depression
Inhlanhla has not seemed well lately. She is looking very thin, but you always see her eating so much! Everyone says they do not think she has an eating disorder because she eats so much!	Bulimia
You are talking with a friend when you notice she has some cuts on her legs, mostly near her upper thighs. You ask her about them and she says she got them from walking in the bush. You have noticed her keeping to herself more and shying away from friends.	Self-Mutilation
A girl in your class has started looking pretty thin. Her hands have turned a yellow-ish color, and you notice that she often skips meals or eats very little. She seems very weak and tired most of the time.	Anorexia
Your new friend is OBSESSED with talking about food. It's the only thing she'll ever discuss, and she's quick to tell everyone how much fat is in each item they eat. She, on the other hand, eats very little, and is always out exercising.	Anorexia
A girl in your class always keeps to herself and is often found reading, writing or drawing. She often looks on the verge of tears, and doesn't seem to enjoy anything.	Depression
Your sister has recently become a binge eater. She eats anything and everything in sight and yet she never puts on any weight. She talks about food and how much she loves it all the time leading you to believe she is obsessed. After every meal she excuses herself to go to the bathroom.	Bulimia

## Week 7: Teenage Pregnancy

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**Abstract:** This week we will discuss the clearly gendered problem of teenage pregnancy. We will discuss contraception and options for pregnant girls. We will practice using condoms as contraceptives and have open and frank discussion about stigmatisms surrounding pregnancy. We'll look at life before and after pregnancy through role-playing and list making. We will then write a form letter to school districts alerting them of the "social" rather than "individual" location of this problem, asking them to cease pregnancy discrimination.

**Goals:** In this lesson girls should learn that pregnancy should always be an informed decision. They should understand their right to conceive and also their rights around prevention and abortion.

### Lesson:

#### 1. Facts and Figures

This portion of the lesson is meant to educate girls as to the scope of the problem presented by teenage pregnancy. Convey this information by prefacing with a conversation about social vs. individual problems. Suggest to the girls that while an individual pregnancy might appear an individual problem, the bigger picture indicates a greater, social problem.

Studies show that 1/3 of South African girls have had a baby by age 20<sup>7</sup>. This figure is especially startling when viewed in conjunction with the schooling age population, and the effect these pregnancies have on education. Pregnancy numbers also seem to correlate with increased incidence of HIV, due to the lack of condom usage. Compounding the educational problems, 93% of teen pregnancies are mothers between the ages of 17 and 19<sup>8</sup>. These numbers are troublesome because these are the last few years of compulsory schooling for children.

One of the indicators of a social problem remains the disparity of frequency, depending on the schools. Some schools may have none or very few cases of teenage pregnancy, while others report up to 70% of their students are pregnant<sup>9</sup>. These startling statistics dictate that the problem is not simply among individual pupils, but one linked to greater social stigmas in society.

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<sup>7</sup>(2007). South Africa: Teenage Pregnancy Figures Cause Alarm. Integrated Regional Information Networks. Johannesburg, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=70538>

<sup>8</sup> Harrison, D. Three Ways to Reduce Teen Pregnancy in South Africa, Human Sciences Research Council. <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/Document-2679.phtml>.

<sup>9</sup> Harrison, D. Three Ways to Reduce Teen Pregnancy in South Africa, Human Sciences Research Council. <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/Document-2679.phtml>.

Once you have explained some of the realities of teenage pregnancy to the girls, ask them a few questions to initiate discussion:

- *Why do you think the pregnancy rate is so high?*
- *Do you think teenage pregnancy is an individual or social problem?*
- *What can we do to prevent these high numbers?*

2. Forms of Conception Activity Sheet<sup>10</sup>:

The object of this activity is for girls to look at some of the different contraceptive options and pregnancy preventative methods. Girls can discuss prevention and the role of culture when it comes to different aspects of contraception. (sheet attached at the end).

Once the girls have finished with the worksheet, you should discuss abortion with them. In South Africa, all women are permitted, by law, to have an abortion up to 12 weeks. From 13 to 20 weeks, women are allowed to have an abortion with the consent of a doctor and anytime afterwards, only if harm to the fetus or the mother is determined by a doctor. Girls should discuss what this means to them, as individuals, as well as to society at large. Are abortions considered culturally acceptable? Did girls even realize they were legal?

3. Yes and No of Pregnancy<sup>11</sup>:

*Materials: scissors and this worksheet of paper.*

This activity is a true/false activity for the group of girls. Cut up these statements below and hand them out to group members. Have each member read the statement in hand and ask the other girls if they believe the statement to be true or false. Discuss why the girls think the way they do before revealing the correct answer.

- When you are pregnant, you cannot attend school. (this statement is not true, as the South African Schools Act of 1996 prohibits discrimination based on pregnancy status).
- Pregnant women should exercise on a regular basis. (this is true, it helps keep the mother's body healthy).
- Employers may decide not to hire you or fire you because you are pregnant. (this statement is not true as the constitution prohibits against this kind of discrimination. Unfortunately, this has not always held up in court as judges have ruled in the interest of the business, against women).

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<sup>1010</sup> Information for this worksheet was adapted from <http://health.mweb.co.za/sex/Contraception/1253-1266,11942.asp>, a South African healthcare and information website.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 3.

- Mothers should always breast-feed their children. (this is not always true as breast milk is one of the fluids that transports HIV/AIDS. If a mother knows she is HIV positive, she should arrange for formula feeding).
- Pregnant women can drink alcohol and smoke cigarettes for the first 12 weeks of their pregnancy. (this is not true as both drugs can have harmful effects on the baby's development).
- Women are allowed to have abortions in South Africa. (we discussed this already, and yes, they are permitted for up to 12 weeks without the authorization of a doctor, and must consult a doctor afterwards).
- Girls who are sexually active at a young age, tend to get pregnant at that young age. (this is a tough question, but studies show that pregnancy among teenage girls is most prevalent between 17 and 19 years of age and therefore those who are sexually active first are only a little bit more likely to get pregnant at a young age).
- Girls who are sexually active and stay in school are less likely to get pregnant. (this is true, as they are also 1.7 times more likely to use a condom).

Have the girls discuss these questions and any other questions they may have for you about teenage pregnancy.

#### 4. Letter to the Schools:

*Materials: paper and pens for all girls. Stamps and envelopes will be needed by facilitator later on to post letters.*

The final activity this week is for the girls to write a letter to the administrator of their schools either commending or disparaging their treatment of pregnant women. Girls should use what they learned in group today to discuss the way that pregnancy is a social problem, often framed as an individual problem, and therefore teenage mothers should not be penalized. Girls should appeal to administrators to encourage pregnant teens to stay in school, and come back at some point after giving birth. Girls can cite the 1996 Schools Act to strengthen their case against their school district. If this is not already happening, girls should suggest that administrators speak with educators about proper and appropriate ways to address classroom pregnancies that do not discriminate against pregnant students.

If girls are uncomfortable writing to their specific administrators, suggest a "to whom it may concern" letter and tell them they do not have to sign it. If the prospect of confronting authority truly bothers them, encourage them to write a hypothetical letter. Collect the girls' school's names and addresses from them and send the letters in the mail, or drop them off at the schools yourself. Let the girls know that community level action is one of the best ways to effect change, and that they are becoming more empowered by standing up for their fellow female's rights.



**Conclusion:**

Conclude this lesson as you have concluded other lessons in the past. Solicit personal questions both for the group and anonymously, and thank the girls for coming to group. Remind them of all they have been talking about and learning about, and inform them that simply discussing these ideas among a group of women serves to empower them.

## Contraceptives Worksheet

*Match the following contraceptives with their definitions then check your answers with the facilitator*

## Male Condom

This method is usually preferred by adults who make the decision that they do not want to have children. In this method a doctor physically removes the possibility of children from either the male or the female. This method does not protect against HIV/ AIDS transmission.

## Birth Control (Oral Contraceptive)

This form of contraception works when the male removes his penis from the female's vagina before ejaculation. This method does not prevent HIV/AIDS transmission and is not always effective.

## Withdrawal/ Pulling Out

This is a barrier method of contraception that is inserted into the female's vagina before sex. It is a preventative barrier that can be used once and removed after sex. It is not 100% effective nor does it fully protect from transmission of STDs.

## Diaphragms

This is a barrier method of contraception that is placed as a covering over the penis before sex. This method is not 100% effective because it can break, but it offers almost complete protection from STD transmission when worn correctly.

## Female Condom

This method of contraception is not available in South Africa, but was at one point, and may be again. For this method, small rods that release hormones into the body to reduce chances of pregnancy are inserted into the upper arm. This method does not protect against STDs but is highly effective at pregnancy prevention.

## Spermicide

This method is a small pill that is taken daily to release hormones into the body and prevent pregnancy. It is also a highly effective way to regulate the female menstrual cycle. This method is highly effective, when used correctly, at pregnancy prevention but does not prevent transmission of STDs.

## Intrauterine Device

This method is inserted by a doctor, to the female uterus to block fertilization. It operates based on hormones and is usually a preferred method of adults. It does not protect against STDs.

## Sterilization

This is a small device placed over the cervix six hours before sexual intercourse to block sperm from entering the uterus. This device is sometimes an effective preventative method but does not protect against STDs.

## Implant

This is a gel or cream that is used in conjunction with other preventative methods to kill sperm before it can enter the uterus. This method is highly ineffective on its own and does not protect against HIV/AIDS.

## Week 8: Girl Fighting

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**Abstract:** This week we will work to discuss the ways that girls bully other girls. We will talk about some of the insults and methods girls use to fight with each other. We will discuss the way that the media/ boys condone this kind of behavior, and what it does to further marginalize the female gender. We work through the issues behind girl fighting by role playing and freeze-framing scenarios.

**Goals:** The goals of this unit are to engage girls in a meaningful discussion about girl fighting that concludes with them agreeing to stick up for one another. Girls should begin to understand how the use of language against each other can serve to further marginalize their gender.

### **Lesson:**

#### 1. Sticks and Stones Can Break My Bones...

*Materials: For this activity, you need flip chart paper if you have access to it and markers. If you do not have flip chart paper, printer paper will do.*

This activity is meant to discuss the ways that girls bring down each other. We will talk about how girls bully one another, and its effect on the way that girls are viewed overall. The premise of this activity is to discuss language, and the language of marginalization and submission. Girls should understand the difference between reclaiming language for a marginalized population, and contributing to that marginalization.

Tape three pieces of paper around the room. Give each girl a pen or pencil and instruct her to go to these papers and write down words that she or others have used against girls. On one of the papers write “how do girls fight” at the top, and have the girls respond to that question. Once the girls are done with this part of the activity, bring the papers into the circle, and start to write their words on the flip chart. As you do, ask them about context of these words. Ask them why girls use these words against other girls, and what they actually mean. For words where girls offer up a different connotation than one would expect, write “what it really means” and translate that word into girl language. Once you have compiled a list of these words, ask the girls a number of questions:

- *Do you think these words describe you?*
- *Do you think these words describe other girls?*
- *What do you think others think/ feel when they hear you use these words against other girls?*

- *What is a more effective strategy for dealing with these issues?*

Briefly discuss the idea of an oppressed minority/ majority “reclaiming” language. Give the girls examples such as gay people using the word “fag,” casually, or girls talking about “that chick,” and ask them what they think about this philosophy. There is no right answer to this question, it is just meant to make them think.

## 2. The Big, Bad Media:

This activity is mean to discuss the way the media portrays cliques and girl fighting. Bring in some conventional examples of girl fighting in the media such as *Mean Girls*, or *Bring it On*. Advertisements from magazines and newspapers can also serve as examples in this situation. Ask the girls about examples with which they are familiar. In each case, discuss the plot, and how the girls were portrayed. Here are some quotes from the movie *Mean Girls (2004)* in case you do not have access to any kind of film/ media projector:

**Janis:** That one there, that's Karen Smith. She is one of the dumbest girls you will ever meet. Damien sat next to her in English last year.

**Damian:** She asked me how to spell orange.

**Janis:** And evil takes a human form in Regina George. Don't be fooled because she may seem like your typical selfish, back-stabbing slut faced ho-bag, but in reality, she's so much more than that

**Cady:** And they have this book, this burn book, where they write mean things about all the girls in our grade.

**Gretchen:** [reading from the Burn Book] Trang Pak is a grotsky, little byotch.

**Regina:** Still true.

**Gretchen:** Dawn Schweitzer is a fat virgin.

**Regina:** Still half-true.

**Karen:** Amber D'Alessio . She made out with a hot dog.

**Gretchen:** Janis Ian-DYKE.

**Cady:** [describing Regina] She's not even that good looking if you really look at her.

**Janis:** I don't know, now that she's getting fatter she's got pretty big jugs

Address the following questions:

- *What were the girls fighting about?*
- *How was the fight portrayed?*

- *Do you think this is an accurate representation of girl fighting?*
- *To what extent does this reinforce the idea that “girls will be girls?”*
- *What effects do the media have on popular culture and reality?*

### 3. Role-playing

For this activity, ask the girls to come up with their own skits about bullying. It might be hard for them at first, and you can certainly help/ be part of one skit but really encourage them to do it on their own. Ask them to use the language you discussed earlier and given the contexts. As the girls are presenting, ask them about how it looks to them, and how it makes them feel. If they giggle or laugh about it, ask them about it, really get to the core of the issues.

When the whole group has presented, reflect on the following questions:

- *What were the central themes of these role plays?*
- *Do you think these are the main things girls fight about?*
- *What do you think this does to an outsider’s perspective of “girl world”?*
- *What do you think about the impact of verbal abuse vs. physical abuse? Would you say one is worse or that one hurts more?*
- *How could these situations have been resolved in a more constructive manner?*

### 4. Dramatized Movie Poster

*Materials: Flip chart paper, markers.*

In this activity girls will then create a “movie poster” for girl fighting depicting traditional stereotypes. This poster is meant to be overdramatized, to some extent, and depict some of the realities of girl fighting. The effect of this poster is to spark discussion about how girl fighting is viewed by the public, and why it perpetuates. Discuss with the girls why girl fighting “sells” in advertising and the media, and why we as females even enjoy the media portrayals from time to time. When the girls have finished making their poster (example to follow), ask the following questions:

- *What made you design the poster this way?*
- *Is this how you see yourself? Is this how you see other girls?*
- *Do you feel you have more girl or guy friends? Why?*
- *Does this poster represent girls in the way you would like them to be represented?*

- *How do you think we can help the “big picture” of girl fighting?*

### **Conclusion:**

At the conclusion of this lesson, stress the importance of solidarity and sisterhood. Reflect on what the girls have learned that has brought them closer as “sisters” and how this can work to support other girls in the community, empowering more than just them. Solicit questions both public and private with the question box.

Sample Movie Poster:

# **Coming to Durban FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY**



## **IT'S ABOUT TO BE A GIRL FIGHT!!!!!!!!!!**

See catty sluts parade around in skimpy clothes to please men. Girls will  
fight dirty and fight rough like total bitches!!



## Week 9: In the Media

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**Abstract:** This week will challenge girls to look at the way that the media portrays women. They will look through magazine ads and newspaper ads to highlight the way that the media objectifies women. They will then make their own ads, from magazines, selling a product, not a person. The girls will look at Barbie as an example of overly sexualized women in the media. Girls will also look at products marketed to children that portray a certain image of women to young girls.

**Goals:** Girls will develop an idea of how women are objectified by the media to market and sell products. They will engage with the realities of airbrushing and fictionalized images of women to learn about how their gender is used and abused in advertising.

### Lesson:

#### 1. What are you selling?

*Materials: you will need a number of advertisements that are selling a woman's body more than the product itself.*

In this activity, girls will challenge themselves with advertisements to figure out what product is actually for sale. They will look at how the female body is exploited for the use of advertisement and the media.

Find advertisements that are selling the female body more than marketing a product. Designate these ads as selling people, not products. Cover up the name, or the small image of what is being sold if possible with sticky notes or small pieces of paper. Show the girls the ads one by one. For each ad, ask the same questions:

- *What is the product being sold in the ad?*
- *How much of the ad, proportionately does the product take up?*
- *What is the hidden message in this ad?*
- *How does this ad make the woman into the object rather than the product?*
- *Would you buy this product because of this ad? Who would? Who is this ad appealing to?*
- *How do ads like this make you feel about the way women are used in advertising?*

Once you have shown the girls a number of ads, and touched upon these questions, discuss the bigger picture: the overall objectification of women by marketing firms and companies. Ask them how they feel about the fact that some marketing firms are run by females. Talk to them about other ways that women are objectified, and in other types of advertising and media. Engage the girls in a conversation about subconscious behavior, and how many ads they come across every day that tell them women have to be thin, sexy and sell their bodies. Work with the girls to develop a prevailing opinion about the effect of subconscious advertising.

## 2. Selling products, not people:

*Materials: magazines, paper, pens, glue*

For this activity, girls will work to create their own advertisements to market products rather than people. Give each girl some magazine pages, glue, paper and a pen to create her advertisement. Instruct her to create an advertisement for any product that she chooses, using the materials at hand. If you want, fashion your own ad beforehand to show as an example, but also make sure to work alongside the girls. When the girls are finished, have each present her own ad to the group and pose the following questions:

- *What is your advertisement selling?*
- *Why did/ didn't you choose to use words in your ad?*
- *What is the group consensus on how effective this ad would be?*
- *What was your thought process as you were creating this ad?*
- *Do you think a marketing company would ever use this ad? Why/ why not?*

Allow the girls a few minutes of open discussion on these “product-oriented” ads, and their viability in markets. Ask them if they think women need to be objectified to sell products.

## 3. Barbie would fall over:

*Materials: For this activity you will need paper and crayons and pens for each girl. In addition you will need to print out and bring some of these images to group with you.*

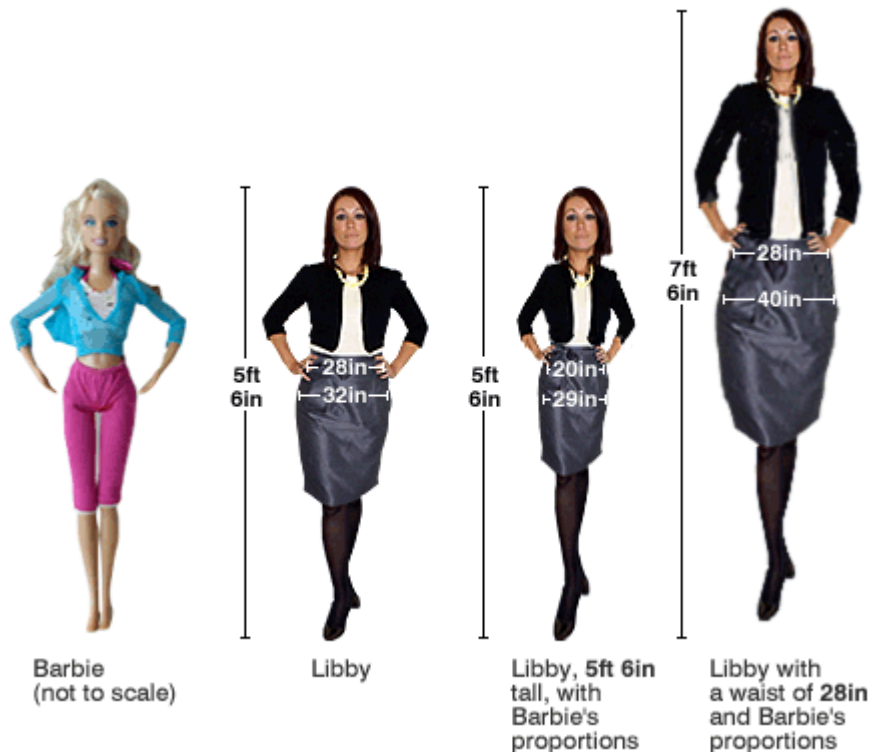
This activity seeks to focus on the idea of body image as it resonates through the toys we play with as children. This lesson will look at marketing toward children and how it can develop skewed perception of reality and body image.

The first child's toy for discussion is Barbie. Have the girls read these facts allowed and show them a picture of the Barbie doll. When you have read the facts, have the girls draw an image of the "real" Barbie on a piece of paper.

### If Barbie Were Real . . .<sup>12</sup>

- She would have to crawl to support her top-heavy frame (due in part to her breasts);
- She would only have room for a radius OR an ulna in her arms (bones located in the forearm that allow for wrist rotation and mobility);
- She would only have room for a tibia OR a fibula in her legs;
- She would only have room for an esophagus OR a trachea in her neck (she could either eat OR breathe . . . we guess she must just breathe);
- She would wear a size 3 children's shoe;
- She would have a severely distorted face (like the pictures of aliens), due to the almost triple average size of her head.

### HOW WOULD A REAL WOMAN LOOK WITH BARBIE'S PROPORTIONS?



Winterman, D. (2009). What Would a Real Life Barbie Look Like? [BBC News](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7920962.stm). [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/magazine/7920962.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7920962.stm)

<sup>12</sup> This excerpt was taken from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/magazine/7920962.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7920962.stm)

Ask the girls how they feel about young children playing with Barbie all the time. Spark a discussion about what they think that dolls like Barbie do to children's sense of body image. What does a child stand to gain or lose from playing with toys such as Barbie?



[http://www.studentsoftheworld.info/sites/misc/img/13617\\_bbt.jpg](http://www.studentsoftheworld.info/sites/misc/img/13617_bbt.jpg)



<http://www.comparestoreprices.co.uk/images/ma/mattel-beach-glam-barbie.jpg>

After discussing Barbie, move on to another childhood figure that shows concerning development for women. Dora the explorer, beloved, Hispanic, children's TV figure has grown up in ways that make her into more of a conventional character. Little Dora appears to have grown up, quite significantly from the wide-eyed wanderer she used to be. Ask the girls what effect they think this has on children's desire to look and act older? What consequences might girls growing up quickly have on society?



09/03/tween-dora-the-explorer.jpg

[http://scienceblogs.com/gregladen/upload/2009/03/the\\_verdict\\_on\\_the\\_new\\_dora\\_th/DoraThe-ExplorerPosters.jpg](http://scienceblogs.com/gregladen/upload/2009/03/the_verdict_on_the_new_dora_th/DoraThe-ExplorerPosters.jpg)

Bratz dolls are another toy for young girls which operates on some questionable ethical principles when it comes to promoting a feminist attitude. Young girls buy these female dolls call “bratz” that first and foremost cast a negative light on girls personalities as being “bratty,” and secondly the dolls are portrayed as very materialistic young ladies. What impact do toys like these have on young girls? What do they do for the overall image of women? What do they make young girls think about the idea of beauty?



[http://images.theage.com.au/ftage/ffximage/2008/05/20/bratz\\_wideweb\\_\\_470x302.0.jpg](http://images.theage.com.au/ftage/ffximage/2008/05/20/bratz_wideweb__470x302.0.jpg)

#### 4. Airbrush Artwork:

The final discussion for this week is about airbrushing as a technique that serves to distort body image. Airbrushing is a digital technique of modifying and changing images to suit advertisers’ needs. It is generally used to make women look thinner or have perfect skin and fantastically fit, toned bodies. Here are some images to share with the girls:





*This image is of a Ralph Lauren Model that drew significant media attention due to the imbalance in her proportions. This woman appears to have a waist and hips that are smaller than her head.*

Kirkup, J. (2009). Airbrushed Images Harming Girls and Boys, Experts Say. Telegraph.co.uk. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/liberaldemocrats/6516537/Airbrushed-images-harming-girls-and-boys-experts-say.html>



This advertisement has been criticized for its misrepresentation of product. The airbrushed image on the left advertises an eye cream and has been labeled deceiving.

Hickman, M. (2009). Airbrushed Twiggy Advert Ruled Misleading by Watchdog. The Independent. United Kingdom. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/advertising/airbrushed-twiggy-advert-ruled-misleading-by-watchdog-1841973.html>



This picture of Jessica Alba was clearly airbrushed to make her waste look thinner, her breasts look fuller and her skin look tanner.

<http://cm1.theinsider.com/thumbnail/400/446/cm1.theinsider.com/media/0/572/84/jessica-alba-airbrushed.jpg>

Ask the girls to reflect on what airbrushing does to girls' perception of reality, and how it is misleading and unfair. Discuss how girls feel about airbrushing and whether or not they knew about it before. Would they view airbrushing any differently if more people knew more about it?

## Conclusion:

At the conclusion of this lesson, discuss how the girls feel about body image, knowing what they know now about the media. Finish by soliciting public and private questions.

## Week 10: Healthy, Happy Relationships

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**Abstract:** In this week, girls will work to formulate group and independent ideas about what constitutes a healthy, happy relationship. Girls will talk about the roles and responsibilities as well as expectations of a relationship, to outline “Mr./Mrs. Right.” Girls will then talk about “no means no,” in order to emphasize that they still have rights in a relationship. We will talk about the expression “who wears the pants,” and discuss what is culturally normative vs. what they want. Girls will role-play discussing unhealthy relationships with a friend to highlight the way that girls should look out for one another.

**Goals:** The goal of this unit is for girls to develop an independent idea of what they want and need out of a relationship. The girls will do this through itemizing a list of expectations to be upheld in any relationship, and working to stay true to those expectations both with themselves and with their friends.

### Lesson:

#### 1. What is a Healthy Relationship?

*Materials: Flip chart paper (or other paper), markers.*

In this part of the lesson, girls will begin to define what constitutes a healthy, happy relationship, and what their expectations for relationships are. Write “unhealthy” on the top of a piece of paper. Ask the girls what “unhealthy” means, in any context. Write this along the top. Ask them if it is ever a good thing, or okay to be unhealthy. Then give the girls an opportunity to look at the word “healthy.” Write this at the top of a piece of paper, and work with the girls to define “healthy.” Make sure that in both these instances, girls look at the root word, and define first and foremost what it means before they begin to contextualize it.

Once you have the definitions of each phrase on the top of a piece of paper, ask them to think about what are signs of a healthy or unhealthy relationship. Write these characteristics on each sheet of paper as they discuss. Ask the following questions to make sure that girls have thought through their answers (the object of this portion of the lesson is to draw conclusions about what different people think about healthy/ unhealthy relationships):

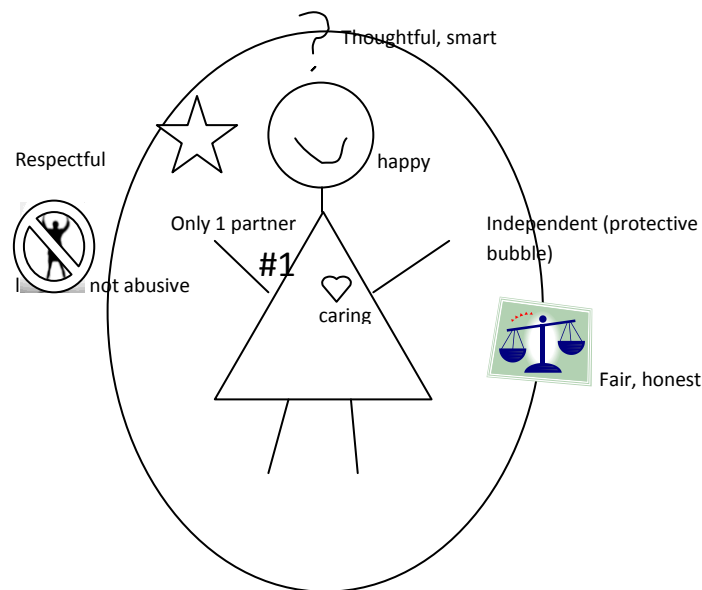
- Does everyone here agree that these characteristics are healthy/ unhealthy?
- Do you believe others would agree with you? Who would/ would not?
  - o What does this indicate about relationship perceptions?
- Do you know anyone in a healthy/ unhealthy relationship given these definitions? If you are willing, please share about this person:

Before you move on from this activity, make sure that the girls have covered abuse, manipulation, lying and touched on how they feel about multiple concurrent partners. On the subject of multiple concurrent partners make sure you or someone in the group stresses the importance of personal protection in this instance. *Trust* is not a good enough reason not to protect yourself, another person should respect your personal health and safety enough to support the decisions you make.

## 2. Who is "Mr./Mrs. Right?"

*Materials: Paper and pens; makers or crayons.*

This lesson is mean to highlight the different expectations girls have of relationship roles. Because many times expectations are a matter of personal preference and opinion, ask the girls to complete this activity separately and then share with the group. Give each girl a piece of paper and ask her to draw a female on the front and an ambiguously sexed partner on the back. Tell the girls that this person is supposed to represent Mr. or Mrs. Right. Explain that the person should not have a gender to allow for open-mindedness, but that each girl can think of that person as part of her preferred gender category. She should then take the female side, and give the drawing characteristics that portray her expectations of herself in a relationship. Here is an example:





Once the girls finish with their drawing of themselves, ask them to do the same to the drawing of their partner. They should think of their expectations and requirements for a relationship. Give them prompts if they need it, and allow them to be silly if they want to (2 meters tall, six-pack, etc.) but make sure that they get the point. At the end of the activity, have girls share their expectations of self and partner with the group. At this moment, other girls should listen intently to what their peers require. Elicit a conversation about control and let the girls know that they are the only one in control of whether or not he/she meets these expectations. Allow them to explain when, if ever, it is okay for the partner *not to meet* one or more of the expectations.

The conclusion of this activity is a discussion about what the girls are going to do with this drawing. Ask them if they want to make it a promise to themselves, of what they will require from a relationship. If so, ask them to sign it as a pact, a personal commitment to themselves.

### 3. Who Wears the Pants?

This activity is meant to empower girls to understand that they can be, and are the ones in control in a relationship. Explain to them that “wearing the pants” is an idiom (a phrase that has a metaphoric meaning) that means who is the dominant one or who is in control. Talk about what “control” means by drawing a pair of pants on a piece of paper and writing what the word means. Ask them to define control in a general context and then in the context of a relationship. Write all these terms and definitions inside the pants.

Once the girls have conceptualized control points in a relationship, ask them which of these points they want to retain. As they speak about control and how to relinquish it and who is in control, be aware of what they want vs. what they think their partners want. Discuss the role society plays in the perception of who wears the pants:

- *Is it okay for girls to wear the pants in relationships in their community?*
- *How would you feel about both of you wearing the pants?*
- *What about literally? Is there any literal reference to pants-wearing in your community?*
- *Do you think there is or can be a generational disconnect in this conversation?*

Remind the girls of the Even Ensler poem, and how it made them feel. Ask them if that poem makes them more inclined to feel the need to be in control.

Have a frank discussion about assault. Talk about how it *never* has a role in a relationship whether asserting control or not, a woman should never be abused. Abuse is one of the physical signals of relationship control. Discuss this with the girls and ask their opinions of abuse they’ve seen on shows such as Generations. Why do women stay in abusive relationships?

#### 4. Role-play Helping a Friend:

This last part of the lesson is to role-play helping a friend out of an unhealthy relationship. Ask them to think of a friend or TV character that has suffered abuse or been in an unhealthy relationship. Begin the activity by asking them to discuss as a group how girls can support each other. Make sure they understand that they are allies, and should feel comfortable openly discussing relationships. Ask them if girls talk about their relationships very often. Tell them that this is one of the tools to protecting themselves and their friends.

Break the girls up into pairs or groups of three. Have the girls develop a scenario where one girl was a friend in an unhealthy relationship and the other girl, or two girls would try to intervene and help their friend. Remember to tell the girls to highlight both situations of physical and mental abuse and other aspects of a relationship that they defined as unhealthy. Participate along with the girls in order to display the peer leadership aspect of this curriculum. When it comes time to present the role plays, make sure everyone is actively listening and participating. The girls in the audience should comment on whether or not the situation was realistic and if they think it would effective.

**Conclusion:** Conclude this lesson by soliciting any public or private questions.

## Week 11: Identity, Life Goals and Group Support

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**Abstract:** In the second to last unit, girls will reflect on their time in girls' group, what they discussed, and how it is important to both them, and their peers. They will look at how their idea of identity has developed since the beginning of group, and what they can give to other girls. Girls will then look at drafting lists of life goals, and action plans for seeing these life goals put into motion. Girls will then discuss the importance of girl-on-girl support and commit to support each other/ other girls in the community through what they have learned.

**Goals:** This lesson aims to transition girls away from girls' group toward a more independent path of empowerment. It will help them talk out the importance of female communication and support.

### Lesson:

#### 1. Check in on Girls' Group Experience:

This activity is not meant to take much time, but is paramount to development of further lesson plans or groups elsewhere. A "check-in" is simply a way of measuring how the girls feel about how the group was conducted and the different lessons they attended. For this activity, human barometer works well to measure attitudes and opinions as well as engaging in separate dialogue. To play human barometer, girls are instructed that one side of the room means "agree" and the other side of the room means "disagree." As questions are read, girls should situate themselves in the room in relation to the word "agree" or "disagree" depending on their feelings. Girls are permitted to stand somewhere in the middle, and do not have to polarize their answers. Once girls have found a place, ask different group members why they chose the spot where they are standing. Push the girls to give you clear and concise answers, reminding them that this is important for future groups. Here are some good questions, but feel free to ask your own:

- *Girls' group was a good experience*
- *I enjoyed all of the subjects we covered in girls' group*
- *I feel more empowered because of girls' group*
- *I will encourage others to join girls' group*

#### 2. Identity Development:

*Materials: paper, pens and crayons*

This activity looks at the way that girls have confronted the development of their identity through group. Girls should look back at the lessons that were covered (1: intro, 2: HIV/AIDS, 3: my body is mine, 4: gender-based violence, 5: sexuality and development, 6: psychological diseases, 7: teenage pregnancy, 8: girl-fighting, 9: in the media, 10: happy, healthy relationships) and how these different lessons have shaped their idea of identity. As the girls reflect back on the different lessons, ask them to draw a picture of who they were when they came to group, and who they understand themselves to be after group. The girls should use both pictures and words to depict themselves before and after group and the transitions they made. Ask them the following questions

- *What are some of the key differences between your drawings?*
- *Which session, in particular, influenced the drawing of your new “self”?*
- *How will this new “self” proceed in the community and in South Africa?*
- *How do you feel when you look between the two portraits of yourself?*

### 3. Life Aspirations and Actualization:

*Materials: paper, pens and crayons*

In this lesson, girls will look toward the future and create a list of goals for the future. Give each girl a piece of paper and a pen or crayons, whichever she feels will best express her desires (through pictures or words or both). Ask each girl to make a list of her goals for the future, distinguishing between now, short term and long term goals. (For helpful time reference, tell girls that now goals are things that they would like to do today, tomorrow and this week. Short-term goals are goals for this week, this month, this year and the next couple of years. Long-term goals span over the time of a number of years, beginning two years from now.) Once girls have completed these lists, ask them to identify the possible obstacles to achieving these goals. After girls have identified obstacles to their goals, have them determine how they will overcome these obstacles.

Tell the girls that the pictures that they made are now roadmaps for their lives. They have outlined the direction that they are headed and speed bumps along the way, but ultimately they have a route to get there. Tell the girls that sometimes people deviate from their road maps or take a longer route to get from point “a” to point “b” but if they really want to, they always get there.

Ask the girls to share their goals with each other and explain how they are their own support network. Ask each girl how she thinks others in the group can help her accomplish her goals, and stress the importance of partnership, sisterhood and togetherness.

#### 4. Allies for Life:

This final session is meant to give girls the confidence and power to support one another. Have them create and sign a contract pledging to be allies for life, helping each other when important. Ask the girls to identify issues where they can be useful as allies and ways in which they will support each other. Talk about how they can use this support to keep meeting and discussing women's issues, even if they are not following a curriculum. Stress the importance of continued open and honest discussion and ask the girls to reflect on how far their discussions, their friendship and their sisterhood has come.

#### **Conclusion:**

Since this is the last week of anonymous question box, make sure the girls are aware, and then one last time ask for anonymous questions, comments and reflections.

## Week 12: Allies in Action!

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**Abstract:** During the final week of girls group, girls will work together to form an action plan to give back to their community. Girls will work together to design some kind of community service to spread the message of “girl power” throughout their community/ school. They will discuss the way that they benefited from this group and will encourage other girls to participate in the group program when it starts again. Any strong leaders from throughout the lessons and weeks will be trained as facilitators to run groups in the future.

**Goals:** The goal of this week is for the girls to give back to their community with the underlying message of girl power.

### **Lesson:**

#### 1. Forming an Action Plan

This lesson has less structure because it is based upon the goals of the individual girls. The girls should develop and implement their own girl power community service program together through this lesson. Encourage them to use the information they learned in group and share it with others. Help them to connect with any resources they may need or certain community members, and challenge them to involve as many members of the community as possible. At the end of this session, ask the girls if any of them would like to lead this kind of girls’ group in their community. Help them get copies of the curriculum to start their very own groups, and praise the way that they are using their empowered status to help others.